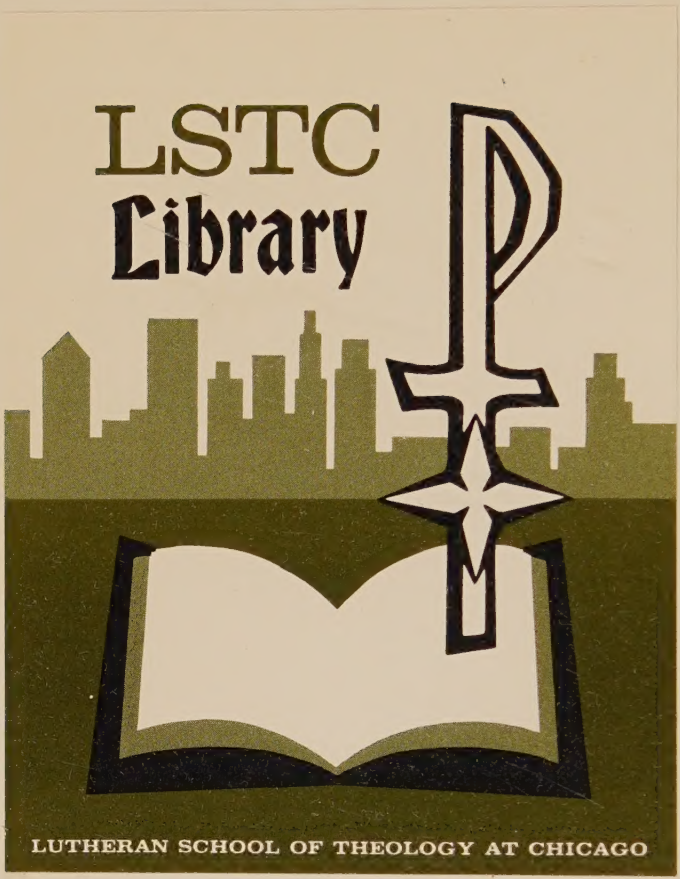
Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library
BR325 .G4
Gelzer, Heinrich, 1813-1889. StorMAIN
The life of Martin Luther, and the refor
3 9967 00090 3752


LSTC
Library
LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CHICAGO

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_T5-BBG-629

LUTHER AFFIXES HIS NINETY-FIVE PROPOSITIONS TO THE CHURCH DOOR.

THE LIFE

OF

MARTIN LUTHER,

AND THE

REFORMATION IN GERMANY.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION

BY THE

REV. THEOPHILUS STORK, D.D.,
AUTHOR OF "THE CHILDREN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT."

Beautifully Illustrated.

PHILADELPHIA:
LINDSAY & BLAKISTON.
1854.

LIBRARY
LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

BR
325
.G4

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY J. FAGAN. PRINTED BY C. SHERMAN.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION—By the Rev. Theophilus Stork, D. D. .... Page 9

PART FIRST.

LIFE OF LUTHER.

CHAPTER I.

Luther's Birth 25
Luther at School 26
Luther sings as a Chorister at the door of Mistress Ursula Cotta, 27

CHAPTER II.

Luther discovers the Latin Bible in the University Library at Erfurt 28
Luther's Friend Alexis is killed by Lightning — Luther overtaken by a terrible Thunderstorm 29
Luther enters the Monastery of the Augustines 30
Luther is solemnly ordained a Priest 31

CHAPTER III.

Luther's bodily and mental Self-torments 32
Luther fainting in his cell; is revived by means of Music 33

PAGE

LUTHER, MENTALLY AND CORPOREALLY EXHAUSTED, IS STRENGTHENED BY THE CONSOLING EXHORTATIONS OF AN OLD MONK 34
LUTHER, AS BACHELOR OF ARTS, LECTURES ON PHILOSOPHY AND DIVINITY 36
LUTHER PREACHES IN THE MONASTERY BEFORE STAUPITZ AND THE OTHER BRETHREN, PREPARATORY TO PREACHING IN THE PALACE AND TOWN CHURCHES 37

CHAPTER IV.

LUTHER'S JOURNEY TO ROME 38
LUTHER IS WITH GREAT SOLEMNITIES CREATED AND CONSECRATED DOCTOR OF DIVINITY AND TEACHER OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES 40
LUTHER OCCUPIED WITH THE DUTIES OF VICAR-GENERAL OF THE AUGUSTINES, WHICH HAD BEEN INTRUSTED TO HIM BY STAUPITZ 41
LUTHER AFFIXES HIS NINETY-FIVE PROPOSITIONS TO THE CHURCH-DOOR 43
LUTHER BEFORE CAJETAN 44
LUTHER'S DISPUTATION WITH DR. ECK AT LEIPZIC 45

CHAPTER V.

LUTHER BURNS THE PAPAL BULL 46
LUTHER'S RECEPTION AT WORMS 47
LUTHER PREPARES HIMSELF BY PRAYER FOR HIS APPEARANCE BEFORE THE EMPEROR AND EMPIRE 48

CHAPTER VI.

LUTHER BEFORE THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPIRE 50
LUTHER CARRIED OFF BY HIS FRIENDS ON HIS RETURN 51
LUTHER BEGINS HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE AT WARTBURG 52
LUTHER'S DEPARTURE ON HORSEBACK FROM THE WARTBURG 53
LUTHER AND THE SWISS STUDENTS IN THE INN CALLED THE BLACK BEAR 53
LUTHER IN THE CIRCLE OF HIS WITTENBERG FRIENDS IS RECOGNISED BY THE SWISS STUDENTS 54
LUTHER CHECKS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IMAGES OF SAINTS 55

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE
LUTHER CONTINUES HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF MELANCHTHON 56
LUTHER PREACHES AT SEEBURG AGAINST THE PEASANTS' WAR 57
LUTHER'S CONTROVERSY WITH ZWINGLE ON THE SACRAMENT 61

CHAPTER VIII.

LUTHER PRESENTS THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION 63
LUTHER'S TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE 65
LUTHER INTRODUCES THE CATECHISM INTO THE SCHOOLS 66
LUTHER PREACHING 68
LUTHER ON THE SACRAMENT 69
LUTHER READS THE BIBLE TO THE ELECTOR JOHN THE CONSTANT 70
LUTHER ON A SICK-BED, IS VISITED AND COMFORTED BY THE ELECTOR JOHN-FREDERICK 72

CHAPTER IX.

LUTHER AT THE SICK-BED OF MELANCHTHON 73
LUTHER'S SINGING AT HOME. INTRODUCTION OF THE GERMAN CHURCH HYMNS AND CHANTS 75
LUTHER'S JOYS OF SUMMER IN THE BOSOM OF HIS FAMILY, AND HIS ORDINARY DINNER-GUESTS 76
LUTHER'S WINTER PLEASURES 78
LUTHER BESIDE THE COFFIN OF HIS DAUGHTER MAGDALEN 79

CHAPTER X.

LUTHER AND HANS KOHLHASE 81
LUTHER DURING THE PLAGUE 82
LUTHER'S LAST JOURNEY; HIS IMPOSING RECEPTION AT MANSFIELD ... 84
LUTHER'S OBSEQUIES 86

PART SECOND.

THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY.

First Sketch.

PAGE
THE PREPARATION FOR WAR 104
THE REFORMATION BEFORE LUTHER 105
THE REFORMATION IN LUTHER 144

Second Sketch.

THE STRUGGLE WITH ROME 181
THE RUPTURE 210

Third Sketch.

THE REFORMATION AND REVOLUTION 232

Fourth Sketch.

THE REFORMER AND HIS WORK 286
LUTHER THE FOUNDER OF A NEW CHURCH 288
LUTHER'S HYMN AND TRANSLATION 313
LUTHER'S DOMESTIC LIFE AND FRIENDSHIPS 333
RETROSPECT AND CONCLUSION 350

LIST

OF

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Luther affixes his Ninety-five Propositions to the Church-door, ... Frontispiece.

Luther sings as a Chorister at the door of Mistress Ursula Cotta at Eisenach ..... Page 27

Luther enters the Monastery of the Augustines, 1505 30

Luther is with great solemnities created and consecrated Doctor of Divinity and Teacher of the Holy Scriptures 40

Luther's Marriage 59

Luther reads the Bible to the Elector John the Constant 70

Luther's Joys of Summer in the bosom of his Family 76

PAGE

LUTHER'S WINTER PLEASURES 78

LUTHER'S OBSEQUIES 86

LUTHER'S INTRODUCTION OF THE CATECHISM INTO THE SCHOOLS 89

LUTHER DISCOVERS THE LATIN BIBLE IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AT ERFURT 148

LUTHER BEFORE CAJETAN 188

LUTHER BURNS THE PAPAL BULL 210

LUTHER BEFORE THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPIRE, 1521 225

LUTHER CONTINUES HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF MELANCHTHON, 1523–4 286

LUTHER SINGING AT HOME — INTRODUCTION OF THE GERMAN CHURCH HYMNS AND CHANTS 313

INTRODUCTION.

No man, since Apostolic times, has filled a larger sphere of human thought, than MARTIN LUTHER; and few, if any, benefactors have stronger claims on the gratitude of mankind.

As a great man and Reformer, it is not strange that both he and his work should be the subject of misapprehension, and sometimes of invidious detraction. It is no easy thing to take the measurement of great men. The pyramid may be measured by geometric rule, and its colossal form transferred, with the nicest precision, to the canvass; "nay, Mont-Blanc is embossed in coloured stucco, and we have his very type and miniature fac-simile in our museums. But, for great men — how pale, thin, ineffectual, do the great figures we would summon from History, rise before us! Scarcely as palpable men, does our utmost effort body them forth: oftenest only, like Ossian's ghosts, in hazy twilight, with stars dim twinkling through their forms. Our Socrates, our Luther, after all that we have talked and argued of them, are to most of us quite invisible: the Sage of Athens, the Monk of Eisleben — not Persons, but Titles. Yet such men, far more than any Alps or Coliseums, are the true world-wonders which it concerns us to behold clearly, and imprint for ever on our remembrance. Great men are the fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of man-

kind: they stand as heavenly signs — ever-living witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be. . . How many weighty reasons, how many innocent allurements, attract our curiosity to such men! We would know them, see them visibly, even as we know and see our like: no hint, no notice, that concerns them, is superfluous or too small for us." *

Hence, we welcome every well-executed effort to give us a more distinct and vivid conception of a great man. The work before us is of this description. It is the Life of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER, the German Reformer, in pictorial representations and historical sketches. It is the grateful tribute of genius, scholarship, and art, to the memory of the greatest man and work of modern Christianity. And we are free to affirm the conviction, that there is no similar work in the English language, which gives a more life-like and impressive view of the great Reformer, or a more philosophical and comprehensive idea of the Reformation as first evolved in the inner experience and spiritual struggles of Luther, and subsequently developed into the permanent form of a New Church.

The appearance of such a work, in its present attractive form, must be matter of heartfelt satisfaction to every Christian and Protestant. "For a well-written life is almost as rare as a well-spent one; and there are certainly many more men whose history deserves to be recorded, than persons willing and able to furnish the record. No sooner does a great man depart, and leave his character as public property, than a crowd of little men rushes towards it. There they are gathered together, blinking up to it with such vision as they

* Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, by Thomas Carlyle. Philadelphia, 1845, p. 226.

have, scanning it from afar, hovering round it this way and that, each cunningly endeavouring, by all arts, to catch some reflex of it, in the little mirror of himself; though, many times, this mirror is so twisted with convexities and concavities, and, indeed, so extremely small in size, that to expect any true image, or any image whatever, from it, is out of the question."*

Luther, like other great men, has been thus blinked at by little men, whose souls were too diminutive to catch the reflection of the whole man. What a distinguished critic says of Polonius, in relation to Hamlet, might be said substantially of some of the critics and biographers of Luther. It takes a whole man to know such a being as Hamlet, and Polonius is but the attic story of a man! Of course, he cannot find a heart or a soul in Hamlet, because he has none himself to find them with. Now, some of these attic-story men, writing about Luther, manifest as much incompetency to understand the Reformer, as the gross and material Polonius to conceive of the etherial Hamlet. That there have been such biographers of Luther, no one will deny. It is reported, that Dr. Johnson, when he heard of Boswell's intention to write a life of him, said, if he were certified Boswell really meant to *write his* life, he would prevent it by *taking Boswell's!* We dare not presume that Luther would have thought of such an expedient against bad biographers, but he would certainly have blushed to see the reflection of himself from some of these little mirrors, "so twisted with convexities and concavities."

Some distinguished doctor undertook to assert, at a religious anniversary some years ago, that the Reformation was only an outward work, and intimated, that Luther himself was not the

---

* Carlyle's Miscellaneous Writings. Phil., 1845, p. 7.

subject of a spiritual regeneration. I explain the moral phenomenon of such sentiments by a reference to the Shaksperian critic just referred to. The said doctor could not understand Luther, for pretty much the same reason that Polonius could not conceive of such a spiritual being as Hamlet.

To pretend a vindication of Luther from the cant prejudices of the ignorant, or the stolid criticisms of inflated sciolists, would be a bootless task; for against stupidity, as has often been said, the gods themselves are powerless.

But there are passages in some of Hallam's works which speak disparagingly of the genius and intellectual greatness of Luther, and which, from the peculiar position and reputation of the author, demand a passing notice. No modern writer has done such marked injustice to the genius of Luther as Hallam. He says, Luther's amazing influence on the revolutions of his own age, and on the opinions of mankind, seems to have produced, as is not unnatural, an exaggerated notion of his intellectual greatness.* From this, and similar expressions of opinion in other places, we infer, that Luther, in the estimate of Hallam, was rather a diminutive man, of little genius, and no literature, save theological. If Hallam had been a mere critic, such shallowness might be overlooked; but in a professed philosophical historian, such a conception of the great Reformer is unpardonable. It is obvious, he did not understand Luther. He confessedly bases his judgment of Luther on his writings, and yet, from his own admission, was unable to read him in his native German. "This alone," says Prof. Stowe, "renders him incapable of judging intelligently respecting his merits as a writer; and knowing nothing, it

* Introduction to the Literature of Europe, vol. i. p. 513.

would have been honourable in him to say nothing, at least, nothing disparagingly. And, by the way, it seems to us that writing a history of European Literature, without a knowledge of German, is much like writing a history of metals, without knowing any thing of iron and steel."*

Rogers† has, no doubt, given the true solution of this singular judgment of Hallam. It arose from contemplating Luther's character too exclusively in the point of view suggested by the literary nature of the work on which the critic was at the time engaged. "It is true that the Reformer's mind did not belong exclusively, or even prevailingly, to either of the two principal types with which we more usually associate genius, and which almost divide the page of literary history between them. The one is, the prevailingly philosophical temperament, with numberless specific differences; the other, the prevailingly poetic, with differences equally numerous: the passion of the one class of minds is speculative and scientific truth; that of the other, ideal beauty. Yet there is another, and not less imposing form of human genius, though it does not figure much on the page of literary history, which has made men as illustrious as man was ever made, either by depth or subtlety of speculation — by opulence or brilliancy of fancy. This class of minds unite some of the rarest endowments of the philosophical and poetical temperaments; and, though the reason in such men is not such as would have made an Aristotle, nor the imagination such as would have made a Homer, these elements are mingled in such proportions and combinations as render the product — the *tertium quid* — not less wonderful

* See Bib. Repos., April, 1844.

† Reason and Faith, and other Miscellanies, p. 94.

than the greatest expansion of either element alone. To these are superadded some qualities which neither bard nor philosopher ever possessed, and the whole is subjected to the action of an energetic will and powerful passions. Such are the minds which are destined to change the face of the world, to originate or control great revolutions, to govern the actions of men by a sagacious calculation of motives, or to govern their thoughts by the magical power of their eloquence. . . . . It is precisely to such an order of genius — whatever his merits or defects as a *writer* — that the intellect of Luther is, in our judgment, to be referred; and, considered in this point of view, we doubt whether it is very possible to exaggerate its greatness. In a sagacious and comprehensive survey of the peculiarities of his position, in all the rapid changes of his most eventful history; in penetrating the characters and detecting the motives of those with whom he had to deal; in fertility of expedients; in promptitude of judgment and of action; in nicely calculating the effect of bold measures, especially in great emergencies — as when he burnt the papal bull, and appeared at the Diet of Worms; in selecting the arguments likely to prevail with the mass of men, and in that contagious enthusiasm of character which imbues and inspires them with a spirit like its own, and fills them with boundless confidence in its leadership; — in all these respects, Luther does not appear to us far behind any of those who have played illustrious parts in this world's affairs, or obtained an empire over the minds of their species. And surely this is sufficient for one man. No one ever denies the intellect of Pericles or Alexander, Cromwell or Napoleon, to be of the highest order, merely because none of them have left ingenious treatises of philosophy, or exquisite strains of poetry, or exhibited any of the traces either of a calm or beautiful

intellect; and, in like manner, it is enough for Luther to be known as the author of the Reformation."

This we regard as a satisfactory explanation of Hallam's singular disparagement of Luther, and gives us at the same time the true stand-point from which to estimate his greatness. It has been said that there are but two things worth living for: to *do* what is worthy of being written, or to *write* what is worthy of being read. It is true; and we maintain that the greater of the two is the doing. Sir Walter Scott, somewhere, says that action is greater than writing. To be is greater than to describe. According to this principle, Luther performed a work greater, sublimer, than any work of genius. He was greater than, as mere artist or author, was Homer or Shakspeare, Phidius or Raphael: he was the original of what they were but copyists. He performed noble deeds, which are but noble thoughts actualized. Upon this principle, Coleridge says, "He was a Poet, indeed, as great a poet as ever lived in any age or country; but his poetic images were so vivid, that they mastered the Poet's own mind. He was possessed with them, as with substances distinct from himself: Luther did not *write*, he *acted* Poems." Carlyle, in his article on "Luther's Psalm," says, "With words he had not learned to make pure music: it was by deeds of Love, or heroic valor, that he spoke freely. . . Nevertheless, though in imperfect articulation, the same voice, if we listen well, is to be heard in his Poems. The following,* for example, jars upon our ears; yet is there something in it like the sound of Alpine avalanches, or the first murmur of earthquakes — in the very vastness of which dissonance a higher unison is revealed to us."†

But, apart from his work, even in a purely literary point of

* "Ein fester Burg ist unser Gott." † Carlyle's Misc., p. 224.

view, Hallam has done Luther great injustice. A mere glance at his voluminous writings—the rapidity of their production—most of them composed, *pro re natâ*, under the pressure of overwhelming engagements, — would make any man, with less temerity than Hallam, falter, in giving utterance to such sentiments of disparagement as are found in his works.

The dullest mind cannot but be struck with the versatility and comprehensiveness of Luther's genius, as displayed in his writings, embracing all subjects — theology, history, politics, education, literature, poetry, and music; whilst in every department he seems almost equally at home, and his views are expressed at times with peculiar eloquence and power; and, indeed, on every topic, his thoughts are original, and sketched with a masterly hand. Prof. Stowe gives a sketch of his productions, in chronological order, which makes one stare with a look of incredulity. "From 1517 to 1526, the first ten years of the Reformation, the number of his publications was 300; from 1527 to 1536, the second decade, the number was 232; and from 1537 to 1546, the year of his death, the number was 183. His first book was published in November, 1517, and he died in February, 1546, an interval of twenty-nine years and four months. In this time, he published 715 volumes, an average of more than twenty-five a year, or one a fortnight for every fortnight of his public life. . . . He continued his labours to the very last. The six weeks immediately preceding his death, he issued thirty-one publications from the press, an average of more than five a week. The complete catalogue of all his works, Latin and German, comprises twenty-four large folio pages, closely printed, in double columns, in the Appendix to Seckendorf."

It seems almost unnecessary to attempt any further refuta-

tion of Hallam's estimate of the great Reformer. But as "braggart Papists and puling Puseyites," and pseudo Protestants, have re-echoed this disparagement, it may not be wholly irrelevant to adduce testimonials from distinguished Romanists, as well as Protestants, expressive of their high estimation of Luther as a man of genius and learning. And first, let us hear what Romanists have said of Luther.

The French Jesuit Maimbourg, of the seventeenth century, a violent enemy of Protestantism, says, "He (Luther) possessed a quick and penetrating genius. He acquired great knowledge of the languages and the fathers,"* &c.

Varillas, the ecclesiastical historian, says, "Nobody exceeded him in philosophy and scholastic theology — nobody equalled him in the art of speaking. He was a most perfect master of eloquence.

Audin, a Jesuit historian, says, "Luther holds a glorious place in German literature. . . . Luther was the great preacher of the Reformation. He possessed almost all the qualities of an orator: an exhaustless store of thought, an imagination as ready to receive as to convey its impressions, and an inconceivable fluency and suppleness of style. . . . He was at once Rabelais and Fontaine — with the droll humour of the one and the polished elegance of the other."†

Frederick Schlegel, confessedly one of the greatest men of his age, and a strict Romanist, says, "As to the intellectual power and greatness of Luther, abstracted from all considerations of the uses to which he applied them, I think there are few, even of his own disciples, who appreciate him highly enough." Concerning Luther as an orator, he says, "Luther displays a most original eloquence, surpassed by few names

* His. du Lutheranisme, Paris, 1680. † Audin's Life of Luther.

that occur in the whole history of literature. He had, indeed, all those properties which render a man fit to be a revolutionary orator." Upon this passage of Schlegel, concerning Luther as an orator, Rogers* remarks, "If this be so, the intellect of Luther must be regarded as one of the rarest phenomena, which appear in the world of mind. Such, at least, has been hitherto the uniform judgment of criticism. To possess a genius for consummate eloquence is always considered to imply intellectual excellence of the highest order. . . . . So peculiar are the required modifications and combinations of intellect, imagination, and passion, that it may be pretty safely averred, we shall as soon see the reproduction of an Aristotle as of a Demosthenes."

From the eulogistic tone and enthusiasm of these sentiments, we might take them for the outgushing admiration of grateful Protestants; but a reference to the authors will show, that, with the exception, perhaps, of Schlegel, they were Luther's bitterest enemies. They were the reluctant testimonials of Romanists to the genius and greatness of Luther — testimonials that were the natural and inevitable expressions of their deep and honest conviction.

We must be allowed a few isolated extracts from Protestants, expressing the same sentiments concerning Luther.

Prof. Stowe, of Andover, says, "There was, probably, never created a more powerful human being, a more gigantic, full-proportioned Man, in the highest sense of the term, than Martin Luther. In him, all that belongs to human nature, all that goes to constitute a *Man*, had a strongly marked and characteristic development. He was a model-man, one that might be shown to other beings, in other parts of the universe,

* Reason and Faith, and other Miscellanies.

as a specimen of collective manhood in its maturest growth."* Similar, in sentiment and expression, is the quaint representation of the Reformer by Carlyle — "I will call this Luther a true great Man; great in intellect, in courage, affection, and integrity; one of our most loveable and precious men. Great, not as a hewn obelisk, but as an Alpine mountain — so simple, honest, spontaneous, not setting up to be great at all; there for quite another purpose than being great! Ah yes, unsubduable granite, piercing far and wide into the heavens; yet, in the clefts of it, fountains, green beautiful valleys, with flowers! A right spiritual Hero and Prophet: once more a true son of Nature and Fact, for whom these centuries, and many to come yet, will be thankful to Heaven."†

Coleridge, whose judgment, on what constitutes the elements of true greatness and the heroical attributes of Human Nature, few will be disposed to question, says — "He is, of all men, the one whom I especially love and admire. . . . It is singular, how all men have agreed in assigning to Luther the heroic character, and indeed it is certainly most just."

We regard it as useless to enlarge further upon this point. We are satisfied to leave the almost isolated detraction of Luther's genius by Hallam beside the noble counter-testimonials just furnished. They might be amplified to almost any extent, from the most distinguished writers since the Reformation, but it would seem a work of supererogation, as the sentiments already adduced express the almost universal conviction of mankind concerning

"The solitary Monk, that shook the world."

That Luther had faults, no one pretends to deny, not even his most enthusiastic admirers. And his faults may seem

* Bib. Rep., April, 1844. † Heroes and Hero Worship.

greater than other men's for the very reason that he was greater than other men: as the towering mountain casts a wider shadow than the little hillock.

> "Luther had faults! but, oh! ye little minds,
> Less in your faith, and lesser still in deeds
> Which make the hero, ...
> . . . . . While the *outer* life
> Ye ponder, have ye pierced the core within?
> A fool can censure where a prophet weeps,
> When life is only by its faults and falls
> Review'd; — but underneath, what noble tears,
> What pangs remorseful, penitence, and prayer,
> What struggles mute, what passionate regrets!
> Deep *in* the bosom — there begins the fight!
> And there the battle-scene 'tween Flesh and Faith
> Unfolds its grandeur. All without appears
> The moral echo of that inward din, —
> The mere reflection of internal strife,
> In fitful shadows, thrown on human eyes."*

Lessing seems to have rejoiced in discovering defects in Luther — "for," says he, "I have, in fact, been in imminent danger of making him an object of idolatrous veneration. The proofs, that in some things he was like other men, are to me as precious as the most dazzling of his virtues."

To those mean and carping spirits that are ever croaking over Luther's imperfections, whilst they overlook his abounding excellencies, I would simply apply the remarks of Coleridge concerning those who complained of the incidental evils of the Reformation. "It argues a narrow and corrupt nature to lose the general and lasting consequences of rare and virtuous energy in the brief accidents which accompanied its first movements — to set lightly by the emancipation of the human reason from a legion of devils, in our complaints and lamentations over the loss of a herd of swine.

---

* Luther; or, Rome and the Reformation, by Rob. Montgomery.

Our object, however, is not to discuss Luther and the Reformation, but to introduce the reader to this new work, in which both are presented in a novel and attractive form.

The present work is a translation from the German work entitled — "Dr. Martin Luther, der Deutsche Reformator. In bildlichen Darstellungen, von Gustav König. In geschichtlichen Umrissen, von Heinrich Gelzer. Hamburg, 1851."

It is a beautiful conception, happily actualized in this work, of interweaving the life of Luther with the Reformation, and thus fusing the one into the other — giving a historical and moral unity and identity to the man and his work. Nor is it a mere ideal of the fancy, but a real picture. "The progress of the Reformation in Luther's own mind; a very curious subject. Such were the great talents and qualities of Luther, and such the situation of Europe at the time, that the Reformation, in fact, passed from the mind of the one into the mind of the other." * And, as Montgomery justly says, "Luther the Reformer is, after all, but an outward and visible index to the inward and invisible characteristics of Luther the Man; and if, in the open light of history, we are struck with the almost miraculous consequences a lonely monk, from the depths of an Augustinian convent, put in motion — not less are we affected to perceive how wonderfully and wisely the trials and experiences of his inner nature were providentially overruled, and wrought into experimental connexion with those religious achievements which have rendered the name of Martin Luther immortal."†

An abstract from the Preface of the original work will substantially indicate the nature and object of the same work in its

* Prof. Smyth's Lectures on Modern History.

† Luther; or, Rome and the Reformation, Biog. Preface to first ed.

present American form. "The elegant drawings, from which the artistic engravings of the original work were made, created a great sensation, at Munich, a few years ago: they found so many and such ardent admirers, that it was resolved to publish them, together with a biography of Luther. Gelzer undertook the latter portion of the work. His object was, he says, to present to his countrymen a book which should renew, in fresh outlines, the image of their great intellectual hero — a book which a father might read to his domestic circle — which might accompany the young student to his high-school — and which might furnish a subject for reflection to the clergyman, whether in the quiet of his native land, or in a new home, in distant colonies, on the other side of the ocean, reminding him, in the latter case, of the land of his fathers, the historical home of his spiritual life and of his faith."*

The second part of the work, giving an outline of the Reformation, is thus defined by Gelzer — "It is not our intention to add one more to the many biographies of our great man, and to repeat all that has been already related so many times, so thoroughly and minutely. Our principal endeavor is, rather to work out the rich abundance of historical facts, and to arrange them in large, easily comprehended groups, so that the *true essential importance of the Reformer and of his work*, for his times and for our own, may be depicted in them to the life." †

In the first part, we have the Life of Luther in pictorial and descriptive representations. The minor details, that are common to every human life, are omitted: assuming that the boy Martin went through the usual process of crying and fretting and pouting, "of being fondled and flattered and flogged; and that the sun and stars and silent sky shed in their soft, sweet

* Preface to London edition. † Gelzer, London edition, p. 65.

influences upon his childhood, for similar things we know happen to most of us, though not indeed with similar results."*

He is sent to school, but no marvellous freaks and eccentricities are related of the boy, which were found long afterwards, to foreshadow the greatness of the man. We read neither of his climbing trees, like Schiller, to see where the lightning came from — nor of his running away from school, like Barrow, to escape from study. He tells us, indeed, of his being whipped fifteen times in one morning, and leaves us now, if we choose, to see in that something prophetic of his future greatness, as a man whose words were battles. Meanwhile, as some one says of Shakspeare, the boy grew both inwardly and outwardly; how much he grew outwardly was apparent to those about him; how much he must have grown inwardly is, or at least ought to be, apparent to us.

In the present American edition, the beautiful artistic illustrations are dispersed throughout the entire work — so that the great historical facts and scenes in the life of Luther, and the grand epochs in the Reformation, pass consecutively before the eye of the reader, and are vividly repictured to the soul, and reimpressed upon the heart. The first in the series represents the youthful Martin, and his companions, at the door of Madame Cotta, in Eisenach. He is there as a poor boy, singing for his daily bread. This bread-music, as he afterwards called it, and the gentle sympathy and timely beneficence of Madame Cotta, no doubt, awakened feelings that were profitably recalled in the darker scenes of his afterlife. Bosomed in that home of art, music, and love, the budding energies of his mind unfolded in blossoms of expanding force and freshness. Oft, amid the storms of life, did he love

* Hudson.

"That sabbath-haven of the soul to haunt
With mem'ry's eye: and once again recall
The bliss of tranquil being." . . .

Never could he forget that womanly kindness and sympathy—that home of his friendless youth — never!

"When years had flown, and Europe's grateful hand
Round Luther's name a wreath of glory twined,
And at his feet the heart of empires bow'd
Admiring, Cotta's home, still unforgot,
Was outlined in his mindful heart of love
Serene as ever; while his voice proclaim'd,
By gallantry and grace at once inspired,—
There's nothing lovelier than a woman's soul,
When Truth divine erects her temple there!" *

Without attempting even a passing allusion to all the pictures that beautify and illustrate this volume, we cannot omit a reference to some of the more striking.

Luther in the Library of the University of Erfurt. The artist depicts the inquiring youth, gazing intently upon the open Bible, absorbed in the history of Samuel and his mother, "having cast aside the schoolmen, and their misunderstood chief, Aristotle."

"That moment was the Reformation's seed:
That volume, then, the universe outweigh'd
In mental preciousness, and moral power!
For, in its pages slept those living germs
Of principle, from out whose depth have sprung
The faith and freedom of a Christian world." †

Luther burning the papal bull. How vividly that "scene, heroically great, and unsurpassed," flashes before us. Luther, condemned by the Pope, felt that the time had now come for an open rupture with Rome. He said to the Pope, "You are not God's vicegerent; you are another's, I think." We see

* Luther, by Montgomery. † Ib.

Luther in the act of casting the decrees of the Pope and the bull of Leo X. into the devouring flames, while

> "The blaze
> Redden'd, and rose beside the eastern gate
> Of Wittenburg."

"Wittenburg," says Carlyle, "looked on, with shouts — the whole world looked on. It was the shout of the awakening of the nations. . . . . Luther had cast off for ever the spectral nightmare and triple-hatted chimera of Rome."

Luther before the Emperor and the Empire, 1521. There is something grand and imposing in this picture. It could not be otherwise, unless the artist had utterly failed to catch the spirit and moral sublimity of the scene. For it was the greatest in modern European history. "That was the most remarkable assembly ever convened on earth — an Empire against a man!" He is before the most august assembly —

> "But, there He stands! in superhuman calm,
> Concentr'd, and sublime, ...
> Crown'd with the grace of everlasting truth,
> A more than monarch, among kings he stood."

The only regret felt in beholding this picture is, that the artist did not impersonate more of the spirit and majesty of the scene in the face and attitude of Luther. It is in our view, a great defect. We could not say of Luther here, what is said of him in another representation of the same scene. "Cranach's picture represents Luther as he stood there — so lone and strong, with his great fire-heart — a new Prometheus, confronting the Jove of the sixteenth century and the German Olympus."

Luther introducing the Catechism into the schools. We advert to this here, because of its historical connexion with the Reformation, as among its "most beautiful fruits." The picture

is one of great artistic beauty, but becomes pre-eminently attractive from its mental contrasts and moral associations. The great Reformer is seen, in the midst of a number of children, expounding his Catechism, whilst Jonas is distributing the book among them. It is a beautiful sight! *He*, who stormed

> "Round the vile Popedom, till its pillars shook,
> Sank to the level of a simple child,
> And won frail childhood to the creed he framed.
> . . . . While the hand which hurl'd
> The false Decretals to the devouring fire
> Plies o'er some little book, or teaching page,
> Where infancy may learn the name to lisp
> Of Jesus; or, the budding mind unfold,
> In faith and freshness, to the call of heaven."*

The artistic illustrations of Luther's domestic life give peculiar interest and attraction to this volume.

Luther's marriage. There is something in this picture that touches the heart. There is a moral grandeur in that quiet scene of beauty. "By this step," says Gelzer, "he as decidedly opposed the Catholicism of the middle ages, as by burning the papal bull." And this accounts for the clamors of the Romanists. "Nothing less than Antichrist," they said, "could be the fruit of the union of a monk and a nun." The taunt well justified the caustic sarcasm of Erasmus: "That there must already have been *many* Antichrists, if *that* was the sole condition of their appearance." No one can look at this picture,

> "Where his devoted heart
> The wedded Luther to his Ketha gave,"

without being deeply impressed with the moral beauty and heavenly sanctity of marriage.

We have two additional pictures, illustrative of Luther's home-life. The first presents Luther in his summer-joys, in

---

* Luther — Poems, by R. Montgomery.

the bosom of his family. It is an exquisite picture of a domestic garden-scene. A glance gives us some idea of the man "whose heart ever opened in the free air, in the sight and enjoyment of nature; who gladly observed and admired the creation, with his pious, thoughtful, and practical eye. Luther had a pure and sanctified poetical feeling, with which he most beautifully invested even the commonest objects around him, and he ever drew from all the events of life loveliness and truth."*

As a counterpart to this summer-scene, we have next, "*Luther's winter pleasures.*" Here we see Luther in the midst of the Christmas festival; "and in the garden, which now delights his eyes, are his children, whom he looked upon as God's greatest blessing."

The series of illustrations fitly closes with a most touching representation of *Luther's obsequies.*

Without protracting these introductory remarks, we commend this memorial of Luther and the Reformation to the Protestant community. Altogether, it is the most beautiful tribute that has recently been paid to the memory and work of the great Reformer. "It is an offering of flowers and fruit on the altar of the greatest memory which the heart of modern Christianity enshrines. It is the whole history of Luther told in pictures, and descriptions of those pictures, followed by a connected sketch of the Reformation as it centered in him."†

It is a book, says Gelzer, which cannot fail to renew, "in fresh outlines, the image of Luther, and depict the true essential importance of the Reformer and of his work, for his time and

* Luther's Fireside, by E. B. Stork.

† C. P. Krauth, Ev. Review, April, 1852.

for our own." And yet, whilst it tends to exalt our conceptions of the genius and moral greatness of the Hero, it is so constructed, in its representation of his work, as to impress us with the fact that, after all, Luther was but the instrument in the hands of God, for the accomplishment of his plans and purposes; and with this recognition of the Divine hand, we exclaim, with Montgomery —

> "And thus, th' Almighty did Himself inspire
> The Reformation; though unheard, unseen,
> And unimagined, in the midst He moved,
> While Luther was the mental Hand which made
> The outward Index of His secret will."

The book is eminently adapted to our own age. "For," says Gelzer, "in this one point, at least, our times are brought into immediate contact with Luther: then, as now, the highest social and religious questions were brought forward for solution; then, as now, the most sacred rights of individuals and of nations were contended for; and in the sixteenth, as in the nineteenth century, the die was cast, on which the future depended."*

The book may possibly be of some service to those in our day, who, in their boast of Lutheranism, have so utterly forgotten the very spirit of Luther and the Reformation. It may be well for those, who are ever vaunting their symbolic orthodoxy, and conjuring the younger of our ministers to venerate the symbols of the church, to hear that noble outburst of Luther, when they began to burn his works — "Let them destroy my works; I desire nothing better; for all I wanted was to lead Christians to the Bible, that they might afterwards throw away my writings. Great God! if we had but a right under-

* Gelzer, Reformation, p. 206.

standing of the Holy Scriptures, what need would there be of my books?" Dr. Cheever thus comments on this declaration of Luther: —

"O, how noble is this! How characteristic of a soul that had drunk deep for its own self into the Bible, and would have every other soul go and plunge into the same fountain of blessedness, and drink, and continue to drink there, and there only. We love Luther for this noble declaration. And sure we are that his works, fresh and powerful as they are, and the works of every other uninspired man, ... when compared with God's word, are but as winking tapers in the light of a noon-day sun. And what should we think of the man who, if a set of gas-lights were hung up to burn in the streets at noon-day, should go about endeavouring to walk by their light, or perpetually calling upon you to admire their glory, while he scarcely seems aware that the sun above him, like the very face of God, is shining with such splendor as almost to put out those pale and ineffectual fires."*

The same original thinker proceeds to say —

"This being the case, on a comparison even of the richly spiritual divines of the seventeenth century with inspiration, how much more with reference to the writers called the Christian Fathers, comprehending so wide and chaotic a gathering of spoils and opinions in what Milton calls the drag-net of antiquity. It would be difficult to depict the ineffable absurdity of sending back the Christians of this generation into the twilight of Romish superstition and philosophy, to interpret Scripture by tradition from the Fathers. Often as we see this attempted exaltation of the early doctors of the church into the place of supremacy over our own faith and opinion as founded on the Scriptures, we think of Taylor's powerful and beautiful delineation of the contrast between those doctors after the time of Christ, and the Jewish prophets before him. 'It must be acknowledged that the writers of the ancient dispensation were such as those should be, who were looking onward towards the bright day of gospel splendor; while the early Christian doctors were just such as one might well expect to find those, who were looking onward toward that deep night of superstition, which covered Europe during the middle ages. The dawn is seen to be gleaming upon the foreheads of the one class of writers, while a sullen gloom overshadows the brows of the other.'"

Every one can see how much we need a revival of the spirit and vital doctrine of the Reformer — the very life and power

* Bib. Rep., Jan., 1844.

of the Reformation. There is everywhere the cry for a more churchly spirit — and much is spoken and written about symbolism and the historical development of the church, creeds, and sacraments, &c., whilst the grand, central doctrine of justification by faith is well-nigh forgotten, or left to slumber beside exploded errors. There is a wonderful zeal to "bring up all the imposing outward show of the past — to take up the cast-off frippery of a past dispensation — to put on the rotten rags of Judaism, gilded with the cross, and idolizing, in the manhood of Christianity, the cradle and standing-stool of its infancy. These were the toys of an immature age, and to keep them up, under the bright light and bracing air of the gospel, is like a man keeping the whistles and sleds, the wooden swords and paper caps of his boyhood, to play with in the gravity of fifty years."*

When we see this sickening cant about the forms and outward observances of the church — this polemical strife about externals — this refined and gilded formalism — this exaltation of *The Church*, in the place of Christ — this effort to make *Church-men*, instead of Christ's-men—we feel that these vaunting disciples of Luther know neither the spirit nor the work of the Reformation. "When we look at the discipline through which Luther and some other men passed, in their baptism with the fire of this doctrine (justification by faith), it seems that we do but dream about it, that we know nothing of it, that we are like men walking and talking in our sleep — a race of religious somnambulists." When we see this painful discrepancy between the spiritual experience and struggles of Luther and the cold and lifeless ritualism of some in our day, who boast his name—we say, they neither understand Luther nor themselves.

* Cheever.

They are ascending Pilate's staircase — "would to God that such a voice from heaven as thundered into Luther's soul might enter into every such man's soul; but, even if it did, it would do no good, without something of Luther's deep spiritual experience, gathered in conflict and prayer."*

The energy and ability of the church are expended upon trivial questions, upon specious or speculative heresies in relation to the symbols and sacraments, whilst it seems to be overlooked that the most dangerous heresy is that of the heart, found in Christ's own church — the want of a purer love, a simpler faith, and a more direct and holy zeal for the salvation of souls. There is no time to speculate and contend with brethren about the controversies of the day, whilst there is this solemn controversy of the Church with her God undecided.

"No, brethren, it is not a fitting season for the Church to be compounding unguents for the freckled skin of a fancied, or, at most, a frivolous heresy, while the plague of lukewarmness is sweeping her streets, and the bier of spiritual death is passing on its way, from door to door of her habitations. We have another and sterner quarrel to settle. The stain of blood — of the blood of souls, is on the floor of our deserted and untrodden closets — upon our pulpits — upon our communion-tables. It is, as the prophet of old witnessed, not found by secret search, but openly, and upon all these. And yet we feel it not, or acknowledging it, we do not aright apprehend, and repent of the evil of our ways."†

"And sure we are, that if Luther were now on earth, to publish again this element of his power (justification by faith), with the freshness of his burning experience, to pour it from the depths of his full heart as from a church organ, accustomed as we are to think that we know all about it, it would stir Christendom now with almost as much enthusiasm, and with almost as great a convulsion, as it did then."‡

But, as he cannot speak to us again, in those living tones of eloquence that once roused the nations, and quickened the slumbering church — we trust, that all who bear his name, may see the great Reformer, in his spiritual experience and

* Cheever. † Miscellanies, by W. R. Williams, p. 107. ‡ Cheever.

inner struggles, his words and his works — living before them, in this book — and catch his spirit, and imitate his example, so far as he breathed the spirit, and followed in the footsteps, of his Lord and our Lord; and learn, at least, to respect those who, like Luther, exalt the Bible above all human authority, and, like him, seek to promote experimental piety, vital godliness, and genuine revivals of religion in the church; remembering that "the history of Protestantism, in its origin and early progress, is simply the history of an extensive and mighty revival of religion."* "May God, in mercy, baptize every one of us with this spirit. May the church possess it. May the spirit and power of *justification by faith* take hold upon us! Then will the final conflict of the Gospel against Romanism, against Formalism, be a short conflict indeed; but a more glorious triumph of God's Word and Spirit than the world has ever witnessed."†

It is with unmingled satisfaction, we hail this new memorial of the immortal Luther, and from its inherent excellency and artistic beauty, predict for it an extensive circulation. The gratitude of the Protestant community is due to the *publishers* for presenting this admirable book to the American public, in a form so beautiful and attractive, and yet so cheap. We hope it will become a household book in every Protestant family, and grace the parlors of our land as a treasured gift-book of the Reformation. And in this home of freedom and the Bible —

> "Long
> May Luther's voice, and Luther's spirit, live
> Unsilenced and unshamed.'

T. STORK.

PHILADELPHIA, July 25th, 1854.

---

* Prof. Stowe, of Andover. † Cheever.

MARTIN LUTHER,

AND THE

Reformation in Germany.

PART FIRST.

LIFE OF LUTHER.

CHAPTER I.

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben, the 10th of November, 1483, and consecrated by prayer to the service of his Lord and Maker.

Conrad Schlüsselburg relates, that Luther's father had often prayed aloud and fervently, at the bedside of his child, that God would grant the boy grace, that he might—remembering his name, Luther, *i. e. lauter* (pure)—forward the propagation of the pure doctrine. Supposing that this account, were unfounded or unauthenticated still, all that is known of the great Reformer's father assures us that the first emotion at the birth of his son was no other than the one here depicted.

The child born on St. Martin's eve, and baptized on that saint's day, received his name; "which baptismal name," says Johann Mathesius, "he has maintained through life with Christian honour, as a valiant warrior and knight of Christ."

LUTHER AT SCHOOL.

Hans Luther took his son to the school at Mansfeld—the second step in that son's life. "Hans Luther brought up his baptised little son creditably in the fear of God by the gains of his mining labours; and when he came to years of discretion, sent him, with heart-felt prayer, to the Latin school, where the boy learnt quickly and industriously the ten commandments, the child's creed, the Lord's prayer, also Donatus, the child's grammar, Cesio Janus, and psalm-singing." (Mathesius.)

In this school, according to Luther's own account, he passed through a physical discipline of great severity. "In one morning," he says, "I was well whipt fifteen times." In his later years he still complains, "how in former times schools were mere prisons or hells, and school-masters tyrants and flagellators; how the poor children were whipt indiscriminately and unceasingly; how they were made to learn with great labour and immoderate toil, but to little

LUTHER SINGS AS A CHORISTER AT THE DOOR OF MISTRESS URSULA COTTA, AT EISENACH.

purpose. To such teachers and masters we were every where obliged to submit: they knew nothing themselves, and could teach us nothing good or useful."

LUTHER SINGS AS A CHORISTER (CURRENDSCHÜLER*) AT THE DOOR OF MISTRESS URSULA COTTA AT EISENACH.

We stand before the house of Mistress Cotta, where Luther sings as a poor scholar for his daily bread. "It is stated," he says, "and it is true, that the Pope himself has been a poor scholar; therefore despise not those poor lads who cry at your door, *Panem propter Deum!* and sing their song for their daily bread. I

* The word *currend* is derived from the Latin *currere*, to run, and, with the addition of *Schüler* (scholar,) is here applied to a company of boys found in those days in almost all considerable German towns, who walked (or ran) through the streets singing hymns. The practice seems to have originated with the begging friars, who wandered about getting their living by alms. They were imitated by the *Bacchantes*, who sang at people's doors and received alms. After the Reformation they were formed into regular chorus-singers, who, like their prototypes, sang at the doors of the wealthier citizens, and were maintained from some charitable or church fund. The Translator remembers such a band very well in her native city, traversing the streets on Sunday, Wednesday, and Saturday mornings, stopping at the doors of the clergymen and of some members of the magistracy, singing hymns appropriate to the days, on Sundays before the beginning of divine service. They were then admitted to the chapel royal, and joined in the choir. They wore curious old-fashioned hats and cloth cloaks, which were regularly provided for them.

myself was once such a screaming boy, and have sought my bread at people's doors, particularly in my beloved city of Eisenach."

Repulsed from several doors, and much depressed, he arrives at length with his choir before the hospitable dwelling of his future foster-mother, the good Mistress Cotta, "a devout matron, who gave him a place at her table, because she had conceived a warm affection for the boy, on account of his singing and his ardent prayer." In the house of this his fostering friend and comforter he became intimate with a higher comforter, music, that noble relief to his war-worn spirit. Here he learnt to play on several musical instruments.

CHAPTER II.

LUTHER DISCOVERS THE LATIN BIBLE IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AT ERFURT, 1501.

But a yet higher study was opening before him than that of music, the Holy Scriptures, the revelation of God! In the library at Erfurt he found the book which was to become the foundation-stone of his future labours. Mathesius relates: "As he searches among the books in the university library, to make

himself acquainted with the good ones, he hits upon the Latin Bible, which he has never seen before. He observes with astonishment that this book contains many more texts, epistles, and gospels, than are usually explained in the homilies, or from the pulpits in churches. As he is turning over the Old Testament, he meets with the history of Samuel and his mother Anna, which he reads hastily through with great joy and delight; he begins to wish from his whole heart that our good God would give him some day such a book to be his own."

This was the first casual sight Luther ever had into that land which was to become his home. He says himself, "As a young man I saw a Bible in the university library at Erfurt, and read a portion of the first book of Samuel; but I had to attend a lecture just then: willingly would I have read through the whole book, but had no opportunity."

LUTHER'S FRIEND ALEXIS IS KILLED BY LIGHTNING—LUTHER OVERTAKEN BY A TERRIBLE THUNDERSTORM.

Presentiments of death in frightful forms arise before the thoughtful mind of young Luther: a university friend (Alexis is said to have been his name) is suddenly killed; a thunderstorm surprises and terrifies him during a solitary ramble. The two events

mature in him the resolution to withdraw from the world, and devote himself entirely to God.

When his good friend is killed, and a violent storm and fearful clap of thunder alarm him greatly, and he is filled with dread of the wrath of God and the last judgment, he resolves and makes a vow that he will enter a monastery, there to serve God and be reconciled unto him by the reading of masses; also to attain his eternal salvation by monastic sanctity. "Help, Saint Anna!" he cried, when the lightning struck close beside him, "and I will forthwith become a monk!"

LUTHER ENTERS THE MONASTERY OF THE AUGUSTINES, 1505.

The vow is accomplished; Luther enters the monastery of the Augustine friars at Erfurt, on St. Alexius's day, July 17th, 1505. Having obtained his first degree at the university, he becomes a monk.

"I became a monk," he wrote some time afterwards to his father, "not willingly, still less to fatten my body, but because, when I was encompassed by the terror and fear of quick-coming death, I vowed a forced and hasty vow."

Only two Latin poets, Virgil and Plautus, now his sole property, accompanied him into the cell of the cloister; he crossed its threshold while yet engaged in anxious internal strife. Like a prophecy of future

LUTHER ENTERS THE MONASTRY OF THE AUGUSTINES. 1505.

liberation did the statue of St. Augustine, the tutelary saint of his order, whose words were destined at a later period to become for him a guide to the living waters, look down upon him.

"I entered the monastery and left the world," he says, "despairing of myself. I thought God would not take my part; and if I meant to go to heaven, and be saved, it must be by my own efforts. For this reason I became a monk, and laboured hard."

LUTHER SOLEMNLY ORDAINED A PRIEST.

The master of arts has become a monk, the monk now becomes a priest. The vow of the monk and the ordination of the priest are raised like two walls between Luther and the profane world, between him and the original Gospel.

On Sunday, Cantate, May 2d, 1507, he read mass for the first time. "It is a fine thing," he said later, "to be a new priest and to celebrate mass for the first time! Blessed was the woman who had borne a priest. A consecrated parson, as compared with a common baptised Christian, was like the morning star compared to a flickering wick."

"As the glorious God, holy in all his works," he writes to Brown a few days before his ordination, "has deemed me, an unworthy sinner, fit to be raised

thus highly, and in his exceeding mercy has called me to his most solemn service, I am in every way bound to undertake the task which has been intrusted to me, that I may be as grateful for his divine goodness as it is possible for such dust as I."

CHAPTER III.

LUTHER'S BODILY AND MENTAL SELF-TORMENTS.

Neither monkish vow nor ordination, however, could bring peace to this troubled heart yearning after God.

"I have indeed"—these are his own words—"kept the rules of my order with great perseverance and zeal; I have often been sick and almost dead with fasting. A disgraceful persecutor and murderer of my own body I was; for I fasted, prayed, watched, wearied, and exhausted myself beyond my strength. We had been brought up under these human ordinances, which had obscured Christ, and made him of no avail to us; I thought that my monkery would be all-sufficient; for I did not believe in Christ, but took him to be only a dreadful judge, as he was painted sitting on a rainbow.

"The more I strove to pacify my conscience by means of fasting, watching, and praying, the less quiet and peace I felt; for the true light was hidden from mine eyes. The more I sought the Lord, and thought to approach him, the further I departed from him.

"There is no greater affliction and misery in this life, than the pain and trouble of a heart that is lost, and knows no counsel or consolation. There is no heavier suffering than sorrow of the heart; for that is death and hell itself. Then let who can unlock and lock again this hell, in order that such a weak and troubled heart may not altogether expire when it is conscious of sin, and suffers such martyrdom thereat."

Nothing external, not the martyr's cross which he embraced, not the castigations with which he tormented himself, could satisfy the longing of his soul.

LUTHER FAINTING IN HIS CELL; IS REVIVED BY MEANS OF MUSIC.

According to Seckendorf's account, this event occurred at Wittenberg, where Luther's friend, Edenberger, roused him with a sacred song, which he and the boys of the choir sang at his door; but the more generally believed version is that this event occurred in the monastery at Erfurt. It is more than probable that such instances of abstraction and the arousing

from it occurred more than once. "For music," thus Luther spoke in praise of the art, "is the best cordial for a sorrowful man, which maketh the heart contented, refreshed, and vigorous."

"I made myself," he states, referring to that period, "so well acquainted with the Bible, that I knew the page and place of every text. No other study than that of the Scriptures interested me; I read them zealously, and imprinted them on my memory. Many a time one single significant text dwelt in my thoughts for a whole day."

LUTHER MENTALLY AND CORPOREALLY EXHAUSTED, IS STRENGTHENED BY THE CONSOLING EXHORTATIONS OF AN OLD MONK.

Still more powerfully than by music was Luther strengthened by the living word of God from the mouth of a believer. "God sent him," relates Mathesius, "an old brother of the monastery as a confessor, who consoled him affectionately, and pointed out to him the merciful forgiveness of sins as announced in the apostolic confession of faith; and who taught him, from the sermons of St. Bernard, that he ought to have this faith also with regard to himself, that our merciful God and Father had granted him forgiveness of all his sins through the sole sacrifice and blood of his Son, and had announced the same, through the Holy Ghost,

in the apostolic church, by the word 'absolution.' This proved a living and powerful consolation to our Doctor's heart, in that he hath often made honourable mention of his confessor, and heartily thanked him." Seckendorf, in his account of Luther having been comforted on his sick-bed by an old monk, apparently confounds this event with an earlier one, when Luther, before his entrance into the monastery, was, during a serious illness, consoled by an old monk in these words: "Be comforted, my young bachelor of arts, thou shalt not die of this attack; our God will yet make of thee a great man, who is to comfort many people. For whom God loveth, and whom he wills to prepare for salvation, on him he early lays the cross; in which school of the cross patient people may learn much."

Luther himself says of these attacks: "In the great temptations which I suffered, and which consumed my body so that I had no breath, no man could comfort me."

The living power which dwelleth in the communion of faith Luther experienced for the first time at the words of that grey-headed man. It was his first conception of the true imperishable church.

LUTHER, AS BACHELOR OF ARTS, LECTURES ON PHILOSOPHY AND DIVINITY.

Luther, in his twenty-fifth year, steps from the monk's cell, as teacher, into the lecture-room; the worst period of his mental troubles is past; the feeling of inward freedom strives for a first imperfect utterance.

Having been called in 1508 to the new university at Wittenberg, he there delivered his first course of lectures on philosophy (on that of Aristotle), and afterwards another on divinity (on the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans.) "Here Brother Martin begins to study the Scriptures, and begins, at the High School, to contend against that sophistry which prevailed every where at that time." Among his hearers at that time was the first rector of the new university, Dr. Pollich of Melrichstadt, physician to the Elector Frederick, and afterwards also doctor of divinity. Of him Mathesius says: "Dr. Pollich, who was at that time a *lux mundi* (light of the world), that is to say, a doctor of laws, of medicine, and of monastic sophistry, would not forget even at table the arguments and conclusions of the monk. 'That monk,' he often said, as I have heard from the mouth of his brother Walter, 'will confound all the learned doctors, propound a new doctrine, and reform the

whole Roman church; for he studies the writings of the prophets and the evangelists; he relies on the word of Jesus Christ—no one can subvert that, either with philosophy or sophistry.'" According to Pollich, Luther himself said, "Let the doctors be the doctors; we must not hearken to what holy church says, but to what Scripture says."

Many years afterwards, in 1528, Luther expresses himself as follows, writing to Staupitz: "Through thee the light of the Gospel was lit up for the first time in the darkness of my soul."

LUTHER PREACHES IN THE MONASTERY BEFORE STAUPITZ AND THE OTHER BRETHREN, PREPARATORY TO PREACHING IN THE PALACE AND TOWN CHURCHES.

Luther the teacher is also to have a cure of souls; the man of the school is to become the man of the church. Unwillingly and fearfully did he comply with the wish of his paternal friend Staupitz, that he should preach. "Oh, how I dread the pulpit! It is no trifling thing to speak to the people in the name of God, and to preach to them!"

His first sermons, until the town church was open to him, he delivered in the small ruinous chapel of his monastery, only thirty feet long and twenty broad. Myronius says, "This chapel might be compared to

the stable in which Christ was born. In this miserable building it was the will of God that his Gospel was to be preached, and his beloved Son Jesus Christ as it were to be born again; not one among the cathedrals or other grand churches did he choose for these excellent sermons." "When I was a young preacher," says Luther himself, "I was fully in earnest, and would willingly have made all the world pious."—"God has led me to it as he did Moses. Had I known all beforehand, he would have had greater trouble ere he had led me thus far. Well, as I have begun, I will go through with this work."

Staupitz, who listened to the first sermon of his spiritual foster-son, lived to see the plant flourish which he had helped to rear.

CHAPTER IV.

LUTHER'S JOURNEY TO ROME, 1510.

A vow had led young Luther into a monastery; another vow (added to a commission from his monastery) took him to Rome. In the monastery, as on his pilgrimage thither, experience awaited him: in each case to be grievously undeceived.

"In the year 1510," writes Mathesius, "his monastery sent him to Rome. There he saw the holy father the Pope, and his pompous religion and impious courtiers. This greatly strengthened him afterwards."

When he came with his companions in sight of Rome, he raised his hands and cried, "I greet thee, thou holy Rome! yes, truly holy through the blood of the martyrs which was here shed." Of the outward show of the prince of the church, he says, "Rome has now its pomps; the Pope goes about in triumph, fine, richly adorned horses before him, and he beareth the host on a white horse."

Luther left the holy city with a sharp thorn in his side. "I would wish that every one who is to become a preacher had been first at Rome, and seen how matters are carried on there." Mathesius says that he frequently expressed himself to the effect, "he would not take a thousand florins not to have been at Rome." "I have myself heard it said at Rome, 'It is impossible that matters can remain in that state; things must change or break down.'" Again, "Pope Julius said, 'If we do not choose to be pious ourselves, let us at least not prevent others.' I have heard say at Rome, 'If there be a hell, Rome has been built on the top of it.' Rome has been the most holy city; but now it has become the most unrighteous and disgraceful. Whoever has been at Rome knows well that things are worse there than can be expressed in words, or believed."

LUTHER IS WITH GREAT SOLEMNITIES CREATED AND CONSECRATED DOCTOR OF DIVINITY AND TEACHER OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

On the 18th and 19th of October, 1512, Luther was solemnly sanctified to his great work, as teacher of his people and his church.

Mathesius says, "Brother Martin was appointed on St. Luke's day doctor of the holy Scriptures, and took the oath, and promised to study and proclaim them all his life; also to defend the holy Christian faith in writing and preaching against all heretics, so help him God!"

Luther says: "But I, Doctor Martinus, have been called upon, compelled to become a teacher, without any wish of my own, from pure obedience. I had to take upon myself the degree of doctor, and vow and promise to my beloved holy Scriptures that I would teach and preach them faithfully in their purity. Teaching accordingly, popedom has come in my way, and wanted to stop me; the consequences whereof may be seen by all who have eyes."

Staupitz had had as much trouble to persuade Luther to accept the dignity of doctor, as previously to persuade him to preach. To his many objections Staupitz replied, "It seems that our God will soon have much work to be done for him in heaven and

LUTHER IS WITH GREAT SOLEMNITIES CREATED AND CONSECRATED DOCTOR OF DIVINITY AND TEACHER OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

upon earth, and therefore he will need many young vigorous doctors to fight his battles. Whether you live or die, God has need of you in his councils."

Karlstadt presided at the solemnity as theological dean (*decan*).

LUTHER OCCUPIED WITH THE DUTIES OF VICAR-GENERAL OF THE AUGUSTINES, WHICH HAD BEEN INTRUSTED TO HIM BY STAUPITZ.

To the mental preparation which Luther had already undergone, a greater experience of life and a more extended intercourse with his fellow-men was now to be added. As *locum tenens* for his friend Staupitz, he had an opportunity of acquiring the habits of active life.

"About this time Staupitz was dispatched to the Netherlands to bring relics from a monastery. In the mean time Luther received the office of vicar, which included the supervision of the monasteries of the Augustines, and the order to institute a visitation of them. For this purpose he travelled from one to the other, assisted the schools, and admonished the brethren to study the Bible, and to live holily, peaceably, and chastely."

In a letter of the 26th of October, 1516, he thus describes to his friend Lange, at Erfurt, the extent of

his daily occupations: "I might find work for two clerks almost, for I am occupied all day in writing letters. I am preacher to the brotherhood, reader at meals (*ecclesiast*), have to preach daily before the community, am also inspector of studies. I am vicar; and that means as much as ten priors (*id est undecies prior*). I lecture on St. Paul and on the Psalms; and am, beside all this, overburdened with household matters."

By the weight of all these labours for the eternal as well as the temporal welfare of those intrusted to his care, was the future head of the new church to be prepared for the arduous duties of the spiritual government of the church.

"The word of a brother repeated and made known from the Scriptures, and spoken in times of trouble and danger, is weighty and important." "If thou believe as firmly as thou ought," he writes in 1516, "then bear patiently with thy disorderly and erring brethren; look upon their sins as thine own, and whatever of good there be in thee, let it be theirs. If thou be a rose and lily of Christ, know that thy path must lie among thorns, and see that thyself become not a thorn through impatience, haughtiness, or secret pride."

On this journey of visitation already he became conscious in his inmost soul of his future calling; for when he learnt in the monastery at Grimma, how

Tetzel, the trafficker in indulgences, was carrying on his trade at the neighbouring town of Wurzen, he exclaimed angrily, "I will make a hole in this drum, so God will!"

It was the first distant lightning-flash, the premonitor of the coming storm. The Reformer was prepared for his great work.

LUTHER AFFIXES HIS NINETY-FIVE PROPOSITIONS TO THE CHURCH-DOOR.

Unpretendingly began the greatest work of modern times by a German monk's affixing his ninety-five Theses to the church-door at Wittenberg. But this unpretending beginning became soon the awakening cry to all Christendom.

"By Tetzel's, the seller of indulgences, audacious talk and abuse, he caused our Luther to buckle on his spiritual armour, and seize David's sling and the sword of the Lord, which meaneth ardent prayer and the pure word of God; and relying for protection on his doctor's degree and his oath, he, in the name of God, assailed Tetzel and his Roman indulgences, teaching boldly that they were dangerous delusions."

The artist represents in his sketch* the church-doors at Wittenberg as symbolical of the great gate of the

* See Frontispiece.

universal Christian church, at which Luther knocks warningly and admonishingly with his Propositions.

LUTHER BEFORE CAJETAN.

Luther appears before the Pope's legate, Cardinal Cajetan, at Augsburg, to defend his doctrine. Although kneeling reverently, according to custom, he courageously refuses to recant, as he is ordered.

Angered by the obstinacy of the German, the Italian flings the written defence at his feet, saying wrathfully: "Appear not again before mine eyes, unless thou recant."

"Because he sat there representing the Pope," are Luther's own words, "he insisted that I should submit and agree to all he said; while, on the contrary, all that I said against it was contemned and laughed at, although I quoted the Scriptures; in short, his fatherly love went no further than that I must suffer violence or recant, for he declared he would not dispute with me."

The artist has sought to depict the moment in which Luther picks up the paper which Cajetan has thrown down, while his friend Staupitz, evidently frightened at the wrath of the church dignitary, tries to pacify both. Luther, according to the advice of

his friends, and assisted by Staupitz and Councillor Langemantel, left Augsburg at night, through a small portal: "Staupitz had procured me a horse, and sent an old horseman with me who was acquainted with the road. I hastened away, without breeches, boots, spurs, or sword, and reached Wittenberg."

LUTHER'S DISPUTATION WITH DR. ECK AT LEIPZIC, 1519.

In Augsburg Luther had contended with the proud prince of the church of Rome; at Leipzic he was to defend his doctrine against the men of the schools in learned debate. On this occasion he spoke the decisive word to Dr. Eck: "I do not recognise any man as the head of the church militant but Jesus Christ only, on the ground of holy Scriptures." "For Luther, like the true Samson, pulled down the pillar on which the Romans rested the power of the Pope, and said, 'that the text on which Dr. Eck relied—Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church—did not refer to St. Peter, still less to any of his successors, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the true rock on which Christianity might stand against all the attacks of hell.'" (Mathesius.)

During this debate, the youthful Melanchton sat by Luther's side, in silent, anxious thought, while the more lively Karlstadt sought to assist his own

weak memory by referring to books. Duke George of Saxony sat listening attentively to the disputants, until at the words of Luther, "that even some of the propositions of Huss and of the Bohemians were perfectly Christian and evangelical," he angrily cries out, "Plague take it!"

CHAPTER V.

LUTHER BURNS THE PAPAL BULL.

Neither cardinals nor doctors, neither negotiations nor disputations, could adjust the quarrel. A rupture ensued; Rome condemned the Wittenberg doctor; the doctor solemnly declared the Roman judgment to be naught; he burnt the Pope's bull containing his condemnation.

"But when the people from Louvain and other universities, the monasteries, and the bishops, attacked Luther's work with glowing fire, such fire having been stirred up and blown into a flame by the Pope at Rome, the spirit of God came upon this second Samson. On the 10th of December he once more caused a great fire to be made at Wittenberg before the Elster

gate, and into it he himself threw the decrees of the Pope, also the bull of Leo X., saying, 'Because thou, godless book, hast aggrieved or defamed the saint of the Lord, let eternal fire aggrieve and consume thee.'" (Mathesius.)

LUTHER'S RECEPTION AT WORMS.

Luther is led from the quiet cell of the cloister, from the lecture-rooms of the university, from the midst of his powerfully-roused community, upon a yet greater scene: all Germany looks upon him as upon no other! The monk, the preacher, and the teacher of Wittenberg has become *the man of the German nation.*

He enters Worms, in the midst of his people, who joyfully greet the man upon whom they found their hopes; old and young, men and women, high and low, clergymen and laymen, all unite in one group.

Beside Luther in the carriage were his friends, Amsdorf, Petrus von Suaven, and the monk Pezenstein; Justus Jonas and many Saxon noblemen, who had gone to meet him, followed on horseback. Thousands of people from all ranks accompanied him to his abode in the "Deutschen Hof."

LUTHER PREPARES HIMSELF BY PRAYER FOR HIS APPEARANCE BEFORE THE EMPEROR AND EMPIRE.

But this waving flood of the people, which on that day bore him upwards so mightily, is not the principal nor the strongest shield of his heart. This beating, warring heart appeals to a higher protection,—to the eternal rock amidst the flood of time and of nations.

Streets and hostelries have become quiet, the masses which to-day shouted his welcome are silent; but he seeks to compose his mind with music, and by gazing upwards into the sacred stillness of the starry sky; —he prays:

"Almighty, eternal God, how poor a thing is this world! how little a matter will cause the people to stand open-mouthed! how little and mean is the confidence of man in God! Do thou, O Lord, assist me against all worldly wisdom and understanding; do this, thou *must* do it, thou alone! It is not indeed my cause, but thine own; I myself have nothing to do here and with the great princes of this world. But it is thy cause, which is just and eternal; I rely upon no man. Come, oh, come! I am ready to give up even my life patiently, like a lamb; for the cause is just; it is thine, and I will not depart from thee eternally. This I resolve in thy name: the world cannot force my conscience. And should my body be de-

stroyed therein, my soul is thine, and remaineth with thee for ever."

The evening afterwards, when he was about to appear before the emperor, he met at the very threshold of the hall the knight George of Frondsberg; who, laying his hand upon Luther's shoulder, said kindly, "Monk, monk ('Mönchlein' being a caressing diminutive), thou enterest upon a path, and art about to take up a position, such as I and many other commanders have never braved even in our most serious battle-array. If thou have right on thy side, and be sure of thy cause, then go on, in the name of God, and be comforted; God will not forsake thee!" Thus spoke, if we are to believe in tradition, the knight of this world to the spiritual knight,—the military hero to the hero of the faith; he spoke with noble modesty, as the inferior to the higher warrior.

LIBRARY
LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

CHAPTER VI.

LUTHER BEFORE THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPIRE, 1521.

THE decisive moment has come! Before the Emperor and the Empire Luther is to prove whether the power of conscience is stronger in him than any other consideration. And it was stronger. "My conscience and the word of God," he says, "hold me prisoner; therefore I may not nor will recant! Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; God help me. Amen!"

"This is one of the glorious days," exclaims Mathesius, "before the end of the world, on which the word of God has been professed and confessed publicly with Christian rejoicings before the Roman emperor and the whole empire of Germany!"

Next to the young Emperor Charles, sits his brother Ferdinand; at their sides the three spiritual and the three temporal electors—the wise Frederick of Saxony sits in front; opposite, on the bench for the princes, we see Philip of Hesse looking attentively at Luther. Dr. Hieronymus Schorf stands behind him as his legal adviser; opposite to him, at the table covered with Luther's works, we see the imperial orator and official of the Archbishop of Treves, Dr. John Eck; nearer

to the emperor, the Cardinal Alexander holds in his hand the bull containing the condemnation of Luther. In the background are seen the Spanish sentinels who mocked the German monk as he retired from the presence.

LUTHER CARRIED OFF BY HIS FRIENDS ON HIS RETURN, 1521.

Neither Spaniard nor Roman was to lay hand on the teacher of the German nation, so strong in the faith; German fidelity and noble princely care had prepared for him a secret asylum.

"But because Luther had been outlawed by the Emperor and excommunicated by the Pope, God inspired the wise Elector of Saxony to give orders, through confidential and trustworthy persons, to take prisoner for a time the outlawed and excommunicated Luther, as the pious servant of God, Obadiah, the teacher of King Ahab, kept one hundred priests for a time concealed in a cavern, and fed them, while the Queen Jezabel sought their life. Our doctor consented to this step at the anxious desire of good people." (Mathesius.)

Captain Berlepsch and Burkard Hund, Lord of Altenstein, with their servants, stopped Luther's carriage in a hollow way near the Castle of Altenstein. in the direction of Waltershausen, and carried him

off. His companion, Amsdorf, had to proceed alone, Luther's younger brother having fled, alarmed at sight of the approaching horsemen.

LUTHER BEGINS HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE AT THE WARTBURG.

The heroic monk has suddenly vanished from the busy market-places of the world; we find him in the quiet chamber of a Thuringian castle disguised as Master George, absorbed in the study of that volume which, since the dark days of Erfurt, had become the shining star of his life. This book was now to speak in the German tongue to German hearts; such was Luther's resolution, and his labour in his Patmos.

"While our Doctor was kept quite secretly at the Wartburg, he was not idle, but pursued daily his studies and his prayers, and devoted himself to the Greek and Hebrew Bibles, and wrote many kind consolatory letters to his friends." (Mathesius.)

"In the mean time," he writes, "I intend to translate the New Testament into our mother tongue, as our people wish. Oh, that every city had its own translator; so that this book might be in the hands and hearts of every one! . . . . I have taken upon myself a burden which surpasses my strength. Now only I perceive what a translation means, and why hitherto no one has ventured to put his name to one.

It is to be hoped that we may give to our Germany a better translation than the Latins possess. It is a great work, well worthy that we should all labour thereat."

LUTHER'S DEPARTURE ON HORSEBACK FROM THE WARTBURG — LUTHER AND THE SWISS STUDENTS IN THE INN CALLED THE BLACK BEAR, AT JENA — LUTHER IN THE CIRCLE OF HIS WITTENBERG FRIENDS IS RECOGNISED BY THE SWISS STUDENTS.

The spiritual knight left his Patmos armed with his best weapon, — his Bible. The news of the disturbances and confusion at Wittenberg bereft him of all peace in his solitude.

"I come," he wrote to his prince, "to Wittenberg under a much higher protection than that of the Elector. In this business the sword neither can nor ought to assist. God alone must here work without human care or interference: therefore he who hath most faith will in this matter protect most."

In this confidence he had begun his journey; and thoughts like these occupied his mind most likely when, at Jena, in the inn called the Black Bear, he opened his heart so cheerfully and affectionately to the two Swiss students (Johannes Kessler and Rütiner, from St. Gall).

One of them, Kessler, has described this meeting:

"In the sitting-room we found a man sitting alone at a table, a little book lying before him; he greeted us kindly, and called us forward to sit beside him at the table; he offered us drink, which we could not refuse; but we did not imagine he was other than a horseman, who sat there dressed according to the custom of the country in a red cap, simple breeches and jacket, a sword at his side, holding with his right hand the pommel of the sword, with the other his book. And we asked him—'Master, can you tell us whether Martin Luther be at this time at Wittenberg, or at which place he may be found?' He replied, 'I am well informed that Luther is not at this time at Wittenberg; but he is soon to be there. Philip Melanchthon is there, however; he teaches Greek, and Hebrew also, both which languages I would truly recommend you to study, for they are necessary for understanding the Scriptures.' In such conversation he became quite familiar with us; so that my companion at last took up and opened the little book which lay before him: it was a Hebrew Psalter."

A few days later these Swiss men meet the same horseman at Wittenberg, at the house of their countryman Dr. H. Schurf, by the side of Melanchthon. "When we were called into the room," relates Kessler, "behold, we find Martin, as we had seen him at Jena, with Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, Nicolaus Arnsdorf, and Dr. Schurf, all telling him what has happened at

Wittenberg during his absence. He greets us smilingly, points with his finger, and says, 'This is the Philip Melanchthon of whom I spoke unto you.'"

LUTHER CHECKS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IMAGES OF SAINTS, 1522.

A new epoch, a yet more severe struggle, was now to begin for Luther. He had to prove to the world whether he could maintain the idea which animated him, even against the false deductions which others had drawn from it; whether he could meet and check the divisions among those who had hitherto been his adherents. From the seed of his doctrine "of the liberty of the Christian," there threatened to shoot up a harvest of the wildest fanaticism, if he should not root it out at the right moment. Already had Karlstadt and the enthusiasts of Zwickau begun to distract, by their iconoclastic mischief, the young community at Wittenberg.

But Luther interfered, and preserved the liberty of the Gospel. "Do not change liberty into compulsion (*Machet nur nicht aus dem Frei sein ein Muss sein*)," he exclaimed, "that ye may not have to render an account of those whom you have led astray by your liberty without love." "As I cannot pour faith into the heart, I neither can nor ought to force or compel any one to believe; for God only can do this, who

alone can communicate life to the hearts of men. We are to preach the word; but the result must be as God pleases. Nothing can come of force and command, but pretence, outward show, and the aping of religion. Let us first of all seek to move the heart; wherever the heart and the mind of all are not moved, there leave it to God; ye cannot do any good. But if ye will carry out such base precepts, I will recant all I have written and preached; I will not stand by you. *The Word hath created heaven and earth and all things; that Word must do it, and not poor sinners like ourselves.*"

CHAPTER VII.

LUTHER CONTINUES HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF MELANCHTHON, 1523–4.

From the confused crowd of the iconoclasts, and their fanatical excesses, we enter once more Luther's silent cell, to witness the quiet and cheerful progress of his translation of the Bible. At his side stands the younger friend and assistant of the reformer,

Philip Melanchthon, the distinguished teacher of the Greek language at the young University. According to Luther's description, he was "a mere youth in age, figure, and appearance; but a man when one considered the extent of his knowledge."

This was the beautiful period of their friendship, when each laboured in the same spirit at their common task, full of admiration of the higher gifts of the other. "See how beautiful and lovely it is when brethren dwell together in unity!"

Luther says in 1522, "No commentator has come nearer to the spirit of the Apostle Paul than my Philippus."

LUTHER PREACHES AT SEEBURG AGAINST THE PEASANTS' WAR, 1525.

The reformation in the church is in danger of being swallowed up by a political revolution; the internal freedom of the Christian is to justify rebellion against the state. This stormy flood Luther opposes with his whole being; shudderingly he seems to look into a bottomless abyss that opens before his people.

In May 1525 he wrote to his brother-in-law from Seeburg, where he had warned the people against rebellious proceedings: "Though they were many more thousand peasants, they are all of them robbers and murderers, who take to the sword for the sake of

their own gratification, and who want to make a new rule in the world, for which they have from God neither law, nor right, nor command; they likewise bring disgrace and dishonour upon the word of God and upon the Gospel: yet I still hope that this will not continue nor last. Well, when I get home, I will prepare myself for death with God's help, and wait my new masters, the robbers and murderers. But sooner than approve of and pronounce right their doings, I would lose an hundred necks, so God in his mercy help me!"

"In this my conscience is secure, although I may lose my life. It endureth but a short time, until the right Judge cometh, who will find both them and us. . . . Their doings and their victories cannot last long."

He had already warned the peasants, some time previously, in his "Admonition to Peace," and said: "Be ye in the right as much as ye may, yet it becometh no Christians to quarrel and to fight, but to suffer wrong and bear evil. Put away the name of Christians, I say, and make it not the cover for your impatient, quarrelsome, and unchristian intentions. That name I will grudge you, nor leave it you, but tear it away from you by writing and preaching, as long as a vein beats in my body."

LUTHER'S MARRIAGE.

LUTHER'S MARRIAGE.

From the agitation caused by his opposition to the iconoclasts Luther had returned to his Bible; from the annihilating struggles of a political revolution he turned to the symbolical erection of a Christian household, to the foundation of a family in the true German and evangelical spirit.

Even during the storm of insurrection he wrote in the spring of 1525, "And if I can fit it, I mean to take my Kate to wife ere I die, in despite of the devil, although I hear that my enemies will continue. I hope they may not take from me my courage and my joy." A few weeks later, on June 13th, he was united to Katharina for life in the house of the town-clerk (*Stadtschreiber*) of Wittenberg: his friend Bugenhagen blessed the sacred union, in the presence of the lawyer Apel and of Lukas Kranach. "Beloved heavenly Father," so did he pray, "as thou hast given me the honour of thy name and of thine office, and willest also that I should be called and be honoured as a father, grant me grace, and bless me, that I may nourish and govern my dear wife, child, and servants, in a divine and Christian manner. . . . . I have not known how to refuse to my beloved Lord and Father this last act of obedience to his will which he claimed of me, in the good hope that God may grant me chil-

dren. Also that I may confirm my doctrine by this my act and deed; seeing that I find still so many faint hearts, notwithstanding the shining light of the Gospel. . . . . I have reaped such great discredit and contempt from this my marriage, that I hope the angels will rejoice and the devils weep. The world and her wiseacres know not nor understand this word, that it is divine and holy. . . If matrimony be the work of God, what wonder that the world should be offended thereat? Is it not also offended that its own God and maker has taken upon himself our flesh and blood and given it for its salvation, as a redemption and as food? . . . . . Matrimony drives, hunts, and forces man into the very innermost and highest moral condition; that is to say, into faith—since there is no higher internal condition than faith, which dependeth solely upon the word of God. . . . . Let the wife think thus: My husband is an image of the true high head of Christ. In the same manner the husband shall love his wife with his whole heart, for the sake of the perfect love which he seeth in Christ, who gave himself for us. Such will be a Christian and divine marriage, of which the heathens know nothing. . . . . It is the highest mercy of God when a married couple love each other with their whole hearts through their whole lives." And this mercy he enjoyed. "My Kate is obedient and amenable to me in all things, more so than I had dared to hope. So that I deem myself richer than Crœsus."

THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN LUTHER AND ZWINGLI ON THE SACRAMENT.

Ten years earlier Luther had stood at Leipzic opposed to the principal and dexterous theological champion of the court of Rome; at Marburg, we find him opposing the spiritual head of the Swiss Reformation. Wittenberg and Zurich, Saxony and Switzerland, represented by their most distinguished professors, debated in the castle at Marburg, from the 1st to the 4th of October 1529, upon the theological interpretation of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and upon the words employed in instituting it.

The profound mystery of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, in its depth and power entirely beyond the range, and indeed opposed to the scholastic controversy, became nevertheless the watchword of party.

Zwingli dreaded a physical interpretation; Luther, on the contrary, dreaded the evaporation of the spiritual element of the sacrament of the communion. One considered that he defended the corner-stone of evangelical Protestantism; the other, the foundation of the Christian church. On one side the cry was, "the spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing!" the other side maintained the blessed presence and full enjoyment of the entire Christ, the undivided Saviour.

Profound and insurmountable antitheses of religious thought and practice, defying the discriminating power of the human understanding!

In vain the Swiss sought to establish a cordial union, notwithstanding these differences, or rather rising above them. "There are no people on earth with whom I would more willingly be united than those of Wittenberg!" cried Zwingli in tears. "Ye have a different spirit from ours!" was Luther's implacable reply. "Conscience is a shy thing; therefore we must not act lightly in such great matters, nor introduce any thing new, unless we have the distinct word of God for it. We deem, truly, that our opponents mean well; but it will be seen that their arguments do not satisfy conscience, as opposed to the meaning of the words, *This is my body*."

Even a Christian and brotherly union was rejected. "To-day," says Luther, "the Landgrave proposed that we should, although maintaining the different opinions, still keep together as brethren and members in Christ. But we want not such brethren or members: let us, however, have peace and goodwill!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION, 1530.

THAT which had been heard thirteen years before at Wittenberg, on the 31st of October, 1517, like the voice of a watchman at midnight, was in full daylight, on the 25th of June 1530, proclaimed at the court of the Bishop of Augsburg, before the Emperor and the country, as the steadfast conviction of many thousand German hearts.

"Great is my joy," says Luther, "to have lived till this hour, when Christ is proclaimed by such confessors, before such an assembly, through so glorious a confession! Now the word is fulfilled: 'I will speak of thy testimony also before kings.' The other also will be fulfilled: 'Thou hast not let me be put to shame;' for 'whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven.'"

In this spirit he comforted his friends with the most joyful confidence: "Ye have confessed Christ Jesus; ye have offered peace, rendered obedience to the Emperor, borne evil, have been covered with contumely, and have not returned evil for evil. To sum

up all, ye have worthily carried on the sacred work, as it becometh his saints. Look up, and lift up your heads, for your deliverance is nigh!"

Being in the castle at Coburg—which, from a Sinai, he intended to make his Sion—Luther could only in the spirit and in prayer be present with his friends during the decisive hours at Augsburg.

"With sighs and prayer," he writes to Melanchthon, "I am in truth faithfully by your side. The cause concerns me also, indeed more than any of you; and it has not been begun lightly or wickedly, or for the sake of honours or worldly good; in this the Holy Ghost is my witness, and the cause itself has shown it until now. If we fall, Christ falls with us, he, the ruler of the world; and though he should fall, I would rather fall with Christ than stand with the Emperor. Christ is the conqueror of the world; that is not false, I know! Why then should we fear the conquered world, as if it were the conqueror?"

A witness, Veit Dietrich, says that he prayed with such reverence, that it could be seen he spoke to God; and yet at the same time with such faith and hope, that it seemed as if he addressed a father and friend. "I know," he prayed, "that thou art our God and father; I am therefore sure that thou wilt bring to shame the persecutors of thy children. If thou do not, the danger is as well thine as ours. The whole cause is thine own. We have been forced to

put our hands to the work; mayest thou protect it now!"

THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

The members of the evangelical church had published their general confession at Augsburg. It is true the source of this confession could only be found in the Bible; and the Bible became their property only through Luther's translation.

"This is one of the greatest miracles," says Mathesius, "which our Lord has caused to be performed, by Dr. Martin Luther, before the end of the world, that he giveth us Germans a very beautiful version of the Bible, and explaineth to us his eternal divine nature, and his merciful will, in good intelligible German words.

"When the whole German Bible had been published, Dr. Luther began anew to revise it with great zeal, industry, and prayer. And as the Son of God had promised, that 'where two or three were gathered together in his name, he would be in the midst of them,' he caused a sanhedrim, as it were, of the best people then about him to assemble weekly, for a few hours before supper, at his house; namely, Dr. Bugenhagen, Dr. Justus Jonas, Dr. Kreuziger, Melanchthon, Mattheus Aurogallus, and also George Rörer the corrector. These were frequently joined by strange

doctors and other learned men, Dr. Bernhard Ziegler, Dr. Forstenius, and others.

"After our doctor had looked through the published Bible, and consulted Jews and foreign philologists, and had also inquired among old German persons for fitting German words, he joined the above assembly with his Latin and new German Bible; he had also the Hebrew text always with him. Melanchthon brought the Greek text; Dr. Kreuziger, both the Hebrew and the Chaldee Bibles. The professors had several tables beside them; and Doctor Pomacer had also a Latin text before him. Every one had previously prepared himself by studying the text. Then Luther, as president, proposed a passage, and collected the votes, and heard what each one had to say on it, according to the peculiarity of the language, and the interpretation of the old doctors."

THE IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOLS: INTRODUCTION OF THE CATECHISM.

Among the most beautiful fruits of the reform movement was the religious instruction of youth in the schools of the people; and nothing lay more at Luther's heart.

"I hold that the magistrates ought to force parents to send their children to school. Can they not force their subjects to bear pikes and muskets in war-time?

why not much more then to send their children to school? for in this instance a worse war impendeth against the detestable devil, who seeketh to drain all cities and countries dry of all worthy people, until he have extracted the kernel, so that only the empty useless shell of worthless people be left standing, whom he may play with and deceive as he listeth! Therefore let all those work who can! Well, my beloved Germans, I have told you enough, ye have heard your Prophet!"

In this spirit he presented to the youth of his nation that master-piece of popular instruction in the elementary truths of Christianity, his *Little Catechism*.

"The wretched miserable want which I witnessed formerly when I was still a visitor, has urged and driven me to give to this Catechism, or Christian teaching, such a small simple form. God help me, what wretchedness have I seen! how ignorant are the common people, particularly in the villages, of all Christian knowledge! and how many of the parochial priests are unskilful and unfit, alas, to teach them! O ye Bishops! how will ye answer it unto Christ that ye have deserted the people thus disgracefully?"

It was his greatest joy and greatest restorative to see the fruits of his labour ripen among the new generation. "Tender youths and maidens grow up so well instructed in the Catechism and the Scriptures, that it soothes my heart to see how, at present, young

boys and maidens pray and believe more, and can tell more of God and of Christ, than formerly, and even, now, all foundation-convents and schools can. Young people like them are truly a paradise, such as the world cannot show. And all this the Lord buildeth; as though he would say: 'Well, my much-beloved Duke Hanns, I confide to thee my noblest treasure, my cheerful paradise; thou shalt be father over it, as my gardener and fosterer.' As if God himself were your daily guest and ward, because his word, and his children who keep his word, are your daily guests and wards, and eat your bread.

The picture represents the great Reformer in the midst of a number of children; to whom, according to the text, "Let little children come unto me," he expounds his Catechism, while Jonas is distributing the book among them; and in the background are seen a circle of attentive schoolmasters, who are preparing themselves by listening to his teaching for the duties of their calling.

PREACHING.

As Luther had translated the Word of God for his people into their mother tongue; as he had interpreted it in his elementary work for the understanding

of children; so did he wish to announce it to the assembled community in sermons, as an explanation, development, and application of the Word of God, of the revelation of God in Christ. Preaching became the principal instrument for the foundation and guidance of the evangelical church. The divine became from this time forward pre-eminently a preacher.

"Therefore mark this, thou parochial priest and preacher! Our office has now become another thing than it was under the Pope; it is now real and beneficial. Therefore has it much more trouble and labour, danger and temptations, and with all that less reward and thanks in this world; but Christ himself will be our reward, so we labour faithfully."

Nor had Luther any sympathy with the heartless fanatical endeavour to exclude the arts from public worship.

"I am not of opinion that all the arts are to be rooted out by the Gospel, as some ultra-divines pretend; but would wish to see all the arts employed, and music particularly, in the service of Him who has given and created them."

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY COMMUNION IN BOTH KINDS.

"*The word and the sacrament*," was for Luther the motto and symbol of the true Christian church. Next to the preaching, the most sacred rite of the evan-

gelical community is—the celebration of the Lord's supper in its original mode and form. By retaining and insisting upon the "real presence" in the sacrament, Luther strove to save the reformed church from the double danger of being either split into a number of sects unconnected with the great Christian church, or driven from its object by the arbitrary opinions of the schools. "Whoever doth not require and long for the sacrament, of him it may be feared that he despises it, and is no Christian; even as he is no Christian who doth not hear and believe in the Gospel. But who doth not reverence the sacrament, that is a sign that he has no sin, no world, no death, no danger, no hell; that is to say, he believeth in none, although he be sunk in them over head and ears. Contrariwise, he needeth not either grace, eternal life, the kingdom of heaven, Christ, or God."

LUTHER READS THE BIBLE TO THE ELECTOR, JOHN THE CONSTANT.

The artist, introducing us to the private life of Luther, gives us in the first instance a proof of the intimate relation that existed between the Reformer and his prince; we see him in confidential conversation with the Elector John, to whom he is reading and explaining the Scriptures. As an individual instance,

LUTHER READS THE BIBLE TO JOHN THE CONSTANT.

this meeting may not perhaps be capable of historical proof; still the picture shows in perfection the beautiful and unshaken unity of mind and of opinion which so closely connected the teacher with the prince, and of which history affords ample proof. It was this prince, indeed, to whom Luther addressed, in 1530, from Coburg to Augsburg, those incomparable words, in which the mutual relation between the two men is so clearly reflected: "The all-merciful God approves himself still more merciful by making his word so powerful and effective in your highness's (*Euer kurfürstlichen Gnaden*) lands. For in your dominions, it is true, there are more excellent preachers and clergymen, and a greater number of them, who teach purely and faithfully, and assist in keeping the blessed peace, than in any other country in the world. God our Lord, who has appointed your highness father and helper over this country, feedeth all through your office and service. Let your highness be comforted. Christ is come, and will confess you before his Father, as you have confessed him before this wicked race. I am grieved that Satan should afflict and trouble your heart; he is a sorry bitter spirit, and cannot bear that the heart of man should rejoice or be at peace, particularly in the Lord; how much less can he bear that your highness should be of good courage, since he well knoweth of how much importance your heart is to us all; and not only to us, but to all the world; nay, I

might almost say to Heaven itself. Therefore we are all bound to assist your highness with prayer, consolations, with love, and in whatever way we can. Oh! the young people will do this, who cry and call, with their innocent tongues, so affectingly to Heaven, and faithfully recommend your highness to the all-merciful God."

LUTHER ON A SICK-BED 1537, IS VISITED AND COMFORTED BY THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK.

In the last picture Luther appeared as the clerical servant of his prince; the son of that prince afterwards visits him kindly in his bodily affliction. He had fallen dangerously ill at Schmalkalden, when, on the Sunday Invocavit (February 1537), the Elector John Fredrick visited and comforted him. "The good God our Lord," said that prince, much affected, "will be merciful unto us, and prolong your life." When Luther, in the fear of death, recommended the Gospel to his future protection, he replied: "I fear, dear Doctor, that if the Lord were to remove you, he would take away his precious word also;" which observation Luther properly contradicted. At parting, John Frederick sought to comfort him with these words: "Your wife shall be as my wife, and your children my children." "The pious prince," writes Luther to his wife, "sent messengers on foot and on horseback to fetch, at any and every expense, whatever might be beneficial to me; but it was not to be."

CHAPTER IX.

LUTHER AT THE SICK-BED OF MELANCHTHON.

Luther by the side of the suffering Melanchthon, raising the almost broken spirit of the sick man with the powerful words of life, was a most touching illustration of Luther's faith, and power in prayer. Melanchthon had suddenly fallen sick at Weimar, while on his way to the monastery at Hagenau. Presentiments of death had accompanied him thither; and a mental affliction, which undermined his strength, threatened the speedy dissolution of the almost exhausted powers of life;—his delicately strung mind was tormented by the bitterest pain that can assail a poor mortal: he was at war with himself, for his conscience could not find rest from the reproach that he had not resisted more heroically the desires and demands of the Landgrave of Hesse, and had thus, it might be said, sanctioned, in part at least, a public slight offered to the evangelical church.

At the call of the Elector, Luther and Kreuziger came to him: the former saw with terror the corpse-like form of his friend, the failing eyes, the fleeting

sense. "God preserve me!" he cried, "how has the devil destroyed this *organon!*" and turning to the window, he poured out his anxious soul in the boldest and most glowing prayer. Words passed through his soul and crossed his lips which, coming from another mouth, might be condemned as blasphemy, but which in him arose from the very depth of a sublime confidence in God, and from an unconditional faith in the Scriptures. "This time I besought the Almighty with great vigour, I attacked him with his own weapons, quoting from Scripture all the promises I could remember, that prayers should be granted, and said that he must grant my prayer, if I was henceforth to put faith in his promises." He then took the hand of the sick man, saying, "Be of good courage, Philip, thou shalt not die; although the Lord might see cause to kill, yet wills he not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn to him and live! God hath called the greatest sinners unto mercy; how much less then will he cast off thee, my Philip, or destroy thee in sin and sadness! Therefore do not give way to grief, do not become thine own murderer, but trust in the Lord, who can kill and bring to life, who can strike and heal again." Melanchthon would rather have passed away in sleep to eternal peace, than have returned to earthly strife; but the spiritually powerful words of Luther recalled him, "No, no, Philip, thou must serve the Lord our God still further!"

He recovered; "recalled from death unto life," he says himself, "by divine power;" and Luther rejoicingly said, "he would bring back the Magister Philip, with the help of God, from the grave to cheerfulness.

LUTHER'S SINGING AT HOME. INTRODUCTION OF THE GERMAN CHURCH HYMNS AND CHANTS.

From Luther's friends we turn to his domestic relations; to which his singing at home (*Cantorei im Hause*) forms a fitting link of connexion, while it serves at the same time as a record of the immortal fame he has acquired by his zeal in improving German vocal church-music.

In the picture he is represented surrounded by his children and friends practising the first evangelical church-melodies under the direction of the electoral chapel-master, John Walther. To the left stands the cantor, to the right Mathesius.

"I have," relates Walther, "sung many a delightful hour with him; and have often observed how our beloved friend became more and more cheerful as we sang, and never grew weary nor had enough of it. He has himself composed the chants to the Epistles and Gospels, has sung them to me, and asked my opinion. He kept me three weeks at Wittenberg, until the first German mass had been chanted in the

parish church. I attended it, and afterwards took a copy of this first German mass with me to Torgau, that I might present it to the Elector.

"At table, as well as afterwards, the Doctor sang sometimes, he also played the lute; I have sung with him; between the songs he introduced good words. . . . . Once, during Advent 1538, when he had the singers at table with him, and they sang beautiful motettes, he said with emotion: 'As our Lord pours out such noble gifts upon us in this life, how glorious will be eternal life! This is only *materia prima*, the beginning.'" (Mathesius.)

In the preface to his first collection of sacred songs and psalms he says that they had been set for four voices, because he wished "that the young people, who ought at all events to be instructed in music and other proper arts, might be rid of their improper love-songs, and learn something good and instructive instead; and to find pleasure in that which is good, as it beseemeth young people."

LUTHER'S JOYS OF SUMMER IN THE BOSOM OF HIS FAMILY, AND HIS ORDINARY DINNER-GUESTS.

The artist here presents to us Luther's summer pleasures in the circle of his family; and at the same time calls attention to those habitual guests at his

LUTHER'S JOYS OF SUMMER IN THE BOSOM OF HIS FAMILY.

table, to whom (as indicated by the young man who is writing behind Luther) we owe the noting down of his table-talk. A garden-scene could not indeed be omitted in a series of pictures, memorials of the man whose heart ever opened in the free air, in the sight and enjoyment of nature; who gladly observed and admired the creation with his pious, thoughtful, and poetical eye.

He wrote to a friend who procured garden-seeds for him: "If Satan and his imps rave and roar, I shall laugh at him, and admire and enjoy, to the Creator's praise, God's blessings in the gardens." He writes to Spalatin in 1526: "I have planted my garden and built a well, both with success. Come to me, and thou shalt be crowned with roses and lilies!"

"If I live, I shall become a gardener," he once said, while in this humour. "The world knows neither God their creator, nor his creatures. Alas! how would man, if Adam had not sinned, have recognised God in all his works, and loved and praised him! Then he might have seen and considered the wisdom, might, and goodness of God even in the smallest flower! We are at present in the dawn of a future life; for we begin to recover the knowledge of creatures which we had lost through Adam's fall. In his creatures we recognise the power of his word; how great that is!—He said, and it was so!"

His profoundly contemplative mind, in its heartfelt

enjoyment of nature, looked upon creation as the divine symbolic expression of the Invisible aud Highest. He compared the Bible, for instance, to a beautiful forest, "in which there is no tree at which my hand has not knocked." Again, he said on a fine spring day (1541) to Justus Jonas, in that tone of mind of mingled melancholy and undefined longing, which sometimes overpowers us amidst the joys of spring: "If there were neither sin nor death, we might be satisfied with this paradise. But all shall be more beautiful still, when the old world shall have been renewed, and a new spring shall open and remain for ever."

LUTHER'S WINTER PLEASURES.

Upon the pleasures of summer follow those of winter,—the Christmas festival; and the garden which now delights Luther's eyes are his children, whom he looked upon as God's greatest blessing. He expressed this one day to his friend Justus Jonas, who admired the branch of a cherry-tree which hung over the table: "Why do you not consider this still more in your children, the fruits of your body, and who are more beautiful and nobler creatures of God than the fruits of any other tree? In them is shown the almighty power, wisdom, and art of God, who has made them out of nothing."

LUTHER'S WINTER PLEASURES.

The crossbow with which the eldest boy shoots at the apples of the Christmas-tree reminds us of a letter which Luther wrote in 1530, from Coburg, to his son, then four years old; and in which he told him of "the gay beautiful garden; the many children; the apples and pears; the fine little horses with golden bridles and silver saddles; the fifes, cymbals, and grand silver crossbows."

Melanchthon is occupied with the little bowman, while "Aunt Lena" looks at a book with the younger boy; and the eldest girl, Magdalen, rejoices in a doll representing the angel of the Christmas festival—as if she had felt a presentiment of soon becoming an angel herself. This hint of the artist prepares us for the solemn nature of the next scene.

LUTHER BESIDE THE COFFIN OF HIS DAUGHTER MAGDALEN.

On the altar of his God, from the inmost depths of his painfully struggling soul, the father gave up the dearest of all he possessed;—his beloved child, ripe for heaven while still on earth, he placed resignedly into the lap of his Creator and Redeemer. On Wednesday, September 20, 1542, his Magdalen, not yet fourteen years old, closed her eyes for ever in the arms of her father, who was praying for her. "I love her much," he said at her bedside; "but if it be thy will,

O God, to take her, I shall gladly know her to be with thee!" When he asked her: "Magdalen, my little daughter, thou wouldst gladly remain here with thy father; but thou wilt also readily go to thy other Father!" the dying child replied: "Yes, dear father, as God wills." "My beloved Lena, thou art well bestowed," he said beside her coffin; "thou shalt rise again, and shine like a star, nay, like the sun. . . . . Indeed, I rejoice in the spirit, but sorrow in the flesh; the flesh will not submit; parting grieves us beyond all measure." And after the funeral he said: "My daughter is now provided for, body and soul. We Christians ought not to mourn; we know that it must be thus: we are most fully assured of eternal life; for God, who has promised it us through his Son, cannot lie. God has now two saints of my flesh! If I could bring my daughter to life again, and she could bring me a kingdom, I would not do it. Oh, she is well cared for! Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! whoever dies thus is assured of eternal life. I wish I and my children, and you all, might depart; for I see evil times coming."

There is a holy peacefulness breathing in the words of the mourning father, powerfully impressive in their solemn simplicity. We seem to hear them: "Thou hast given, thou hast taken away; blessed be thy name!"

CHAPTER X.

LUTHER AND HANS KOHLHASE.

LUTHER'S interview with Hans Kohlhase is a striking instance of the Reformer's moral courage, and the almost magic influence of his name.

This unhappy individual, originally an honest much-respected man, of a strong and vigorous mind, but passionate, and with a keen perception of justice and of his own rights, was driven to desperation by a series of injuries, and a denial of all redress, inflicted upon him by the ruling powers: he became a robber, and on several occasions acted in concert with the most violent opponents of the constituted authorities of that day. A character such as this was well calculated to inspire Luther with the most lively interest; for in the depths of his soul also violent passions lay hid, subdued and controlled by his higher qualities and by his faith.

The *Chronica* of Peter Haftiti states that a warning letter which Luther addressed to Kohlhase, and in which he solemnly and impressively admonishes him to repentance, encouraged the outcast to go to Luther's

house, and, without naming himself, implore for admission. "It occurred suddenly to Luther that this might be Kohlhase; therefore he went to the door himself, and said: '*Numquid tu es Hans Kohlhase?*' to which the answer was, '*Jam, Domine Doctor.*' Upon this he was let in; and Luther conducted him solemnly to his own room, and sent for Master Philip (Melanchthon) and several other divines. These Kohlhase made acquainted with the state of his affairs; and all remained with him until late at night. In the morning he confessed himself to Luther, received the holy communion, and promised that he would abstain from violence, and injure the Saxon lands no further. He departed, unrecognised and unobserved, from the hostelry; having been consoled by the promise that they (Luther and his friends) would advocate his cause, and bring it to a good end." When this interference proved unavailing, Kohlhase resumed his attempts to right himself by violence; and was at length taken, condemned, and executed, 1540.

LUTHER DURING THE PLAGUE.

Luther, inspired by the courage which faith gives, looked death in the face even when it approached in the terrible guise of the plague. This awful disease had broken out three times in Wittenberg (1516,

1527, 1535); and three times he remained in the midst of the danger, although he was pressingly requested to absent himself.

"I hope," he wrote to Lange, in 1516, "that the world will stand, though Martin Luther fall. I mean to disperse the brethren in all directions; but I have been posted here, and here I must remain. I do not say this because I do not fear death—for I am not the Apostle Paul, but only his commentator—but I trust God will protect me from all my fears." Eleven years later, when the greater number of the inhabitants had left, and the university had been removed to Jena, he cried: "We are not alone; Christ and your prayers, and those of all the saints, are with us; also the holy angels, invisible, but powerful! If it be the will of God that we should remain and die, our care will avail us nothing. Let every one dispose his mind this way: if he be bound to remain and to assist his fellow-men in their death-struggles, let him resign himself to God, and say, 'Lord, I am in thy hand; thou hast fixed me here; thy will be done.'"

On All-saints day, ten years after the indulgences had been trodden under foot (1527), he complained to Amsdorf: "My house is becoming an hospital; Hanna, Dr. Augustin's wife, has carried the plague about with her, but she is now recovered; Margaretta Mochina frightened us with one boil and other symptoms, but she is well again; for my Kate I fear much, for she is

near her lying in; my little son also has been ill for the last three days. Thus there is struggle abroad and fear within—and both violent enough. Christ visits us sorely; the only consolation which we can oppose to the wrath of Satan is, that we have God's word for the salvation of our souls, even though he destroy our bodies. Therefore do thou and our brethren include us in your prayers, that we may firmly bear the hand of God." On the 10th of December he writes: "I am like a dying man; and behold, I live!" At the end of the year he exclaimed thankfully: "God hath shown himself wondrously merciful unto us."

LUTHER'S LAST JOURNEY—HIS IMPOSING RECEPTION AT MANSFELD.

The man of battles begins a journey of peace: as peacemaker he proceeds to his home; it was, as he had felt it to be, his last journey, which led him to eternal peace, and to his real home. "The world is tired of me, and I am tired of it; we shall part easily, as a guest leaves his hostelry not unwilling."

He had twice attempted in the preceding year to adjust the quarrel between the Counts of Mansfeld; and now, accompanied by his three sons, he started a third time (January 23d, 1546). His Katherina saw him depart with a sorrowful heart, as if she had a

presentiment that she should never see him again, at least not otherwise than in his coffin. In vain he sought to cheer her in his letters by gay and grave remarks: "Read St. John and the Little Catechism, my beloved Kate, for thou seemest to fear for thy God, as if he were not almighty, and could not create ten Dr. Martins, if the one old one were drowned in the Saale." "Do not trouble me with thine anxieties; I have a better protector than thee and all the angels. He lieth in the manger, or clings to the breast of the Virgin, but sitteth also at the right hand of God our Father Almighty. Therefore rest in peace. Amen."

He had escaped death in crossing the Saale during a flood (January 28th), that he might depart this life a few weeks later at the very place where he had entered it, at Eisleben. At the frontiers of Mansfeld he was received by the counts with a great retinue: he went there to reconcile the brothers and other relations who were at issue among themselves about their worldly possessions. This task was a most painful one for him. "In this school," he says, "one may learn why the Lord in his Gospel calls riches thorns."

LUTHER'S DEATH.

An eventful great life, of which the results are incalculable, approaches its end; the heart stands still, that has beaten so warmly and faithfully for his peo-

ple, for Christianity, and for the Gospel. Shortly before his end he said, sighing, "Good God! I feel so anxious and troubled; I am going: I shall assuredly remain at Eisleben!" and then he prayed: "I thank thee, O God, that thou hast revealed thy beloved Son Jesus Christ unto me, in whom I have believed, and whom I have confessed and preached, and whom the sorry Pope and all godless people persecute. . . . . O heavenly Father, although I must resign my body and be torn away from this life, I know that I shall be with thee for ever, and that no one can tear me from thy hands. . . . . God has so loved this world," &c. The words which he repeated frequently during his last hours were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth!" When Jonas and Cœlius asked him, "Reverend father, shall you die faithful to Christ and to the doctrine you have preached?" he answered distinctly, "Yes." This word was his last on earth, spoken in the first hour of February the 18th, 1546.

LUTHER'S OBSEQUIES.

Once more we stand at Wittenberg before Luther; but the eloquent lips are silent, the eye is closed which once he raised with holy confidence to the emperor and the country, to the pope and the cardinals; he is silent for ever in the church to which he

LUTHER'S OBSEQUIES.

had affixed thirty years before a word that was to shake the world. His body had been carried, as ordered by the Elector, in solemn procession from Eisleben to Wittenberg, that a place of rest might be prepared for it in the electoral chapel. Next to the coffin stands his friend Melanchthon, who had during twenty-eight years fought indefatigably by his side. On the morning of the 19th of February he had, deeply affected by the news of the death, pronounced in his lecture-room, with few but emphatic words, the testimony of history and of the Protestant world upon the departed: "The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins and of faith in the Son of God has not been discovered by any human understanding, but has been revealed unto us by God through this man, whom He had raised up." On the day of the funeral also, after Dr. Bugenhagen had preached, he once more bore witness to the value of the labours of the departed: "His doctrine does not consist in rebellious opinions made known with violence; it is rather an interpretation of the divine will and of the true worship of God, an explanation of the Scriptures, a sermon of the word of God, namely, the Gospel of Christ. . . . . Now he is united with the prophets, of whom he loved to talk; now they greet him as their fellow-labourer, and with him thank the Lord who collects and maintains his church."

Three times has the centenary festival of his death been celebrated in Wittenberg, but still Germany and the German evangelical church await a second Luther. To many has been given the power to develop in an equal or a higher degree some one single feature of his sublime being; but where find a second time that inexhaustible depth of faith, with the same irresistible command of the popular language, united to the same strength of will and readiness for action? where this blessed absorbing in God, with the power of ruling mankind? where find once more that union of qualities, the non-existence of which as thus united has constituted for centuries the hereditary want of Germany? Even to-day we still ask this at the grave of the German reformer.

MARTIN LUTHER,

AND THE

Reformation in Germany.

PART SECOND.

REFORMATION IN GERMANY.

The most important distinction between ancient and modern times is the idea of God and the world; for the most essential part, the very soul of an individual, of a nation, and of humanity, reveals itself in the highest object of their aspirations, of their will and their love;—to be brief, it reveals itself in the inquiry after the highest good, after the living God.

We perceive as the universal feature of the ages before Christ, that men sought God in the world exclusively, that the world was their God: now as creative nature, the all-encompassing power, the eternally renewing life of the universe; now as perfect form, as corporeal beauty and symmetry; or as the enjoyment

of intellectual beauty; or as reason, the clear thought complete in itself; or finally, as a community of law and of power in the state.

Between ancient and modern nations we find a people which recognises God not only in the world, but above it, and thus becomes the precursor of a new epoch. In another respect this people belongs still to ancient times; for the wishes of the majority are deeply rooted in the visible and perishable world, so that its God appears rather like an external ordinance, and not yet as the abstract idea of love. The highest spiritual representatives, the prophets and poets, and the whole history of this people in the closest connexion, point all the more urgently to a Being divinely great and new in the coming time.

When that olden time reached its full development, when all its latent instincts entered into reality, now symbolically, now actively in deeds, then only could the great imperishable meaning of all these indications, as also their tendency, which was unsatisfactory and seductive to the last degree, be placed in the clear light of history. It must become evident that all the power and fulness of corporeal existence, all perishable beauty and reason, all political activity and moral law, do not in themselves alone bear the indestructible germ of life, that they can give no answer to the last decisive questions.

The era which divides the old from the new epoch began when man recognised the Divinity no longer in the world, but found the world in God and through Him; when the Divinity appeared to him no longer merely as nature, reason, or law, but as the original source and revelation of the most holy love, as "without controversy, the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh."

This revelation began with the announcement, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand:" a new life was to open before the human race; it was to be led by new paths towards its highest goal; these paths, as well as this end, had become a man, had become a person, a history, a divine word and divine act, the Saviour of the world. When divine Love descended as Saviour into the world in human form, it raised man again, through the greatest and freest sacrifice, to his first divine destination.

If we look upon the origin of Christianity as the word and deed of divine love, as the salvation and renovation of humanity, embracing all future times, we shall see in the essence of all modern history only the one grand struggle which the Christian spirit has had to maintain against the selfish spirit of this world; the development of the new life upon which the world had entered, which strives to pervade, reform, and animate all the modes of existence.

The reformatory spirit of the new epoch entered into history at first as a dominant power, as the exuberant fulness of a higher light and life: it was that great and unparalleled event of the day of Pentecost, in which the past and the future gloriously became one. The new divine life appeared to the human mind as *one* in its depth, but *manifold* in its revelation and adaptation:—to the human conscience, as reconciliation of the divine Creator to man's sinful race; to the heart, as salvation from a shattered and disordered existence; to the plain childlike mind and to the abstract thinker, as the mystery of compassionate and omnipresent love. As the Master said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

That life, when opposed to the then existing forms of the world, had on its first appearance to confine itself within itself, as a separate circle, as a community divided from the rest of the world; its inherent power and depth were to be developed, before it could pervade the diversified movements of the time.

In the first instance, the spirit of Christianity had free course only in the family circle and the religious community; the other sections of common life, the state and the school, continued imbued with the spirit of this world, in its ungodly emptiness and exclusiveness. But the Christian idea was soon to embrace all science, and begin to gather to itself the "treasures

of wisdom and knowledge" which had been promised, so that the great word of the apostle might be fulfilled: "All are yours."

The last step remained to be taken,—to throw open to Christianity, now grown strong and tried in the storms of time, the arena of the state; when this was done, the Christian state-church came into existence. This was a step of immeasurable importance, bitterly wept over by thousands since then as the root of future corruption, as a victory of worldliness, but loudly applauded by others as the spiritualisation of the state, as the foundation-stone of the reconciliation between state and Christian polity, between God and the world.

But at that time so much is certain,—men were yet far from that highest end of temporal development. How different would the results have been, if the empire of Constantine and the civilisation of the period had been pervaded in its inmost veins and nerves by the original spirit of Christianity! The Roman empire was like a worn-out old man who has wasted his strength in wickedness; he is allowed time for repentance; but a fresh creation, the fulness of life, the freshness of soul, are denied him. Rome, however, by her political organisation and civilisation, was destined by Providence as the fitting vessel to re-

ceive and contain the eternal treasure, and deliver it over to coming times.

Under the shocks of the invading Germanic nations, the Roman empire fell into ruins. What would then have become of the world, if these untamed savage nations had not been met by at least one power capable of civilising and training them for a higher bond of union? It is true, Christianity did not appear to them in its original simple and pure form; it had adopted more imposing forms, and the splendours of worldly dignity; and these splendours, these forms, it borrowed from the state, when it became a state-church. To gain over the world more easily and quickly, the church had not disdained a close alliance with the old Roman spirit of conquest and organisation; thus she appeared before the victorious Germanic nations, who learned to bow down to her spiritual superiority.

The old empire of Rome arose again as the church of Rome; the vanquished ruler of the world flourished anew as the papacy. In Rome, and among the people subject to the Roman sway, the tie was formed which was to keep Europe together, no longer as a temporal state, but as a spiritual organisation, as a Christian church. All political power, on the contrary, rested almost entirely with the Germanic nations. In all

directions arose warlike feudal states, consisting of triumphant conquerors and enslaved subjects.

Thus, in the middle ages, a twofold conquest, a mutual subjection, had been accomplished of the Germanic nations through the church of Rome, and of the nations subject to Rome through the Germanic state. Under the papacy as in the empire, in the Roman hierarchy and in the feudal power of Germany, the two highest points of development in the middle ages had been attained.

These two dominant powers, both so strong and so assuming, could not fail to quarrel one with the other. Thus arose that struggle which for centuries continued to shake the world, the temporal and the spiritual powers, which the emperors of the Frankonian and the Hohenstauffen races, and the Innocents and the Gregories, carried on with changing fortunes; a struggle which gave rise to the theory of the spiritual and the temporal sword, or to that popish theory of the church being the ruling *spirit* of the *body* politic; while in embittered opponents of church dominion it excited the suspicion that Christianity itself was but a political invention. Minds more noble and religious sought for the source of the existing confusion and deterioration in the perversion of Christianity to the state-church by Constantine. Walter of the Vogelweide, for instance, the poet of his time, on occasion of Constantine bestowing great gifts on the papal

chair, causes an angel to lament, "that formerly Christianity stood beauteous in its chastity; but now a gift was granted it which would convert its honey into gall, to the misfortune of the world."

The struggle had brought on exhaustion, but no solution of the two most profound preblems regarding humanity, whose temporal and eternal destiny was left undecided and uncomprehended.

The church of the middle ages had undoubtedly great, indisputable merits in relation to the Christian world: only ignorance or irreligious stupidity could mistake or despise them. The powerful but unrestrained and savage nature of the victorious races was prepared by the church for a higher morality and an advance in civilisation; the emblematical language of the prevailing visible worship in which Christianity clothed itself made a deep impression on the feelings and the imagination of these children of nature. Even in this emblematical language, and in this form of religion, the tacit promise was conveyed of a future more spiritual faith.

Nor must it be considered a less important benefit to European development and civilisation, that in a strongly organised church, in a hierarchy established on the monarchical principle, a spiritual and moral bond was formed, which enchained all European nations in one common union of faith and progress.

With this acknowledgment of what the church of the middle ages has accomplished, we by no means say that its profounder ideas were realised. As yet the Christian spirit had, upon the whole, only been outwardly understood as a symbol, an ordinance; while life, the world in its multifariousness and liberty, was not yet truly impressed and influenced by it.

There was no want of great attempts to attain this last object. Chivalry and monachism were, in their origin, nothing less than bold efforts to make good the Christian spirit in practical life and in overcoming the world. The spirit of chivalry in its most flourishing time sought to raise active life to a higher moral standard by a powerful and inspired devotedness to honour, fidelity, and love. By reverence of the holy and beautiful, by protecting the weak and helpless, chivalry sought Christian consecration, which afterwards found a higher object in the defence and extension of the Christian faith through the spiritual orders of knighthood, and reached its highest elevation in the Crusades.

Monachism, on the contrary, proceeded from the notion, that the material world, notwithstanding all the victories of the church, was still lying in darkness, that the problem of the inward change of the human race through Christianity remained unsolved. To attack this evil at the very root, men resolved upon an open and unconditional rupture with the world,

upon an unconditional subjection and annihilation of all that is worldly in man's nature: love of liberty and desire of dominion were sacrificed to obedience, personal possessions to vows of poverty, and sensual enjoyment to self-mortification. The original idea of monachism was (who could mistake it!) an energetic conception of Christianity as the religion of the cross,—a giving up of the world. Erring in the choice of means, equally erring and leading to error in the conception of its object, it was nevertheless a grand attempt at achieving a more real victory over the world.

But both chivalry and monachism had their time: first blossom, then decay; attempts at renovation, and a relapse. As the spirit of chivalry subsided at last into barbarism and absurdity, or the polish of the courtier; so monachism sank anew, under the weight of the riches and indulgences with which it had loaded itself, into the very depths of that worldliness whence it had so strenuously attempted to extricate mankind. Both these attempts at Christian improvement, at a victory over this world, ended alike in the very reverse of that which had been their original object.

We return once more to our previous conclusion: the highest task of Christianity remained unaccomplished at the end of the middle ages, and its fundamental ideas were only half understood. In the unbounded striving after worldly dominion, the church

of the priests, after having fulfilled one great destiny, had lost sight of its true aim. It was, in close connexion with these spiritual errors, given up also outwardly to the most immoral worldly practices. But one loud cry of indignation is heard throughout the period at this demoralisation. "Never," so mourns the noblest German poet of the thirteenth century, "was Christianity so entirely sunk in error: those who ought to teach the people are abhorred by God, and sin without fear; they show us the way to heaven, and themselves go to hell; their words they say we may follow, but not their steps. We all complain that our father the Pope confuses us, and yet, like a father, he shows us an example; we follow him, and depart not from his footsteps: if he be avaricious, all are avaricious with him: if he lie, we all lie too; if he cheat, we also cheat. The shepherd has become a wolf; young Judas as bad as the old; the treasurer of God has stolen his heavenly hoard from him; he has falsified the word of God, and resisted his work!" Similar and stronger lamentations we find in the poets of those days in southern France. In Italy itself, Dante, in his *Divina Commedia*, speaks with rebuking wrath of "the lord and protector of the new Pharisees in the Lateran;" and Petrarch depicts the papal court at Avignon in the darkest colours, as the kingdom of Greed, where "no crime was feared, so money could be gained thereby; where the hope of a future

life was called a vain fable; where the punishment of hell, resurrection, and the last judgment, were accounted children's tales; where truth was called madness, self-denial coarseness, and chastity a reproach!"

The state also, in consequence of the struggle against the tyranny and greed of the church, had already begun to withdraw itself here and there, not only from priestly, but also from religious and moral influence; and to strive for a position and an importance, sufficient in itself and independent, confined to merely perishable objects, and totally disconnected from all the eternal principles of existence. From these ideas arose the Italian policy, in the same country which had become the centre of the church in its perfect worldliness; a policy which, in its complete and conscious desertion of all divine motives, all the moral restraints of life, represents the summit of unbounded and self-complacent worldliness.

If the Christian spirit were to continue its work for humanity, it must create new instruments for the task, and through them give a new form to the world.

As Christianity had at its first appearance kept itself secluded from the world, so long as that world was in open opposition to its spirit; so it now broke away from the church of Rome, the external form it had hitherto assumed, because she had become

opposed to its true nature through perversion and servility.

The original spirit of Christianity separating under severe struggles from its first historical form, had to build its church anew in the sanctuary of the soul, and seek its home in the depth of the individual, thence to arise as a purified community.

Now, when the earlier communities of church and state had more and more lost their former beneficial influence, and the creation of a completely heathenish body politic was threatened, by the side of which the church would have stood insignificant and ineffectual, —how immeasurably important was it, that exactly at this moment of religious and moral dissolution, a spiritual power should be called forth which led back the worldly spirit to its eternal source, and undertook to regulate and raise the life and feelings of nations by divine authority! This return to fundamental principles, when contemplated in all its bearings, was precisely the deepest significance of the epoch before the Reformation.

Through the opening clouds the genius of religion and humanity looked once more towards that eminence which is its ultimate destination. The development of man through Christianity attained its maturity; that which had hitherto been given to the youthful mind of the people in images frequently significant, frequently distorted, and in obscure promises, was now

to be offered to the longing spirit as its own possession, as its true blessedness; and thus, as the rightful privilege of the heart, enter the world again, purifying and renovating it from within. From the days of the Reformation to our own, we see, therefore, only one intimately connected period, which is yet far from its conclusion.

When the Christian spirit abandoned its first strong but merely outward worldly form, to address itself, confiding in its spiritual power, to the minds of men, it undoubtedly entered upon the open sea of life, and exposed itself to all the storms of human passion, uncertainty, and vacillation. As every great revolution throws doubts on all that previously existed, so there arose with the Reformation also great dangers for the spiritual nature and undisturbed organic development of Christianity; having lost its outward influence previously, its moral weight only could be threatened, when it was overwhelmed by the new instincts and desires, the new ideas and convictions of a differently constituted period.

These dangers showed themselves in their full extent, when, at a later period, the self-seeking, worldly, and carnal interests appeared almost exclusively in the foreground, and faith was degraded in the systems of politicians to a cipher, until by degrees most of the departments of private, political, and ecclesiastical life, in mutual conflict, in forgetfulness of their high

origin, and in selfish isolation, withered or disappeared in lingering dissolving corruption. And yet the Christian spirit need not have recoiled affrighted from all these dangers; for, to prove the irresistible power of its divine nature, it had to contend, even in a modest form (such as it assumed at the Reformation), against all the spiritual and temporal powers of the world, and, secure of victory, to strive arduously for development during centuries.

Only to a strong original mind, deeply imbued with religion, could a great historical force of so deeply spiritual a nature as the Reformation owe its existence.

Luther, by the peculiarity of his natural abilities and of his mind, as well as by the direction of his spiritual and worldly experiences, was called upon to become the spiritual instrument of this great reformatory power; all the important efforts for improvement of the century pervaded his soul in living unity, as the germinating force and the suggestive watchword of a new era.

FIRST SKETCH.

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

We have intentionally described these pages, in which the striking picture of the Reformer of Germany is to be worthily exhibited, as mere historical sketches; because we wished to remind every reader at the outset, that it is not our intention to add one more to the many biographies of our great man, and to repeat all that has been already related so many times, so thoroughly and minutely. Our principal endeavour is, rather to work out the rich abundance of historical facts, and to arrange them in large, easily comprehended groups, so that *the true essential importance of the Reformer and of his work*, for his time and for our own, may be depicted in them to the life. *His importance for his time and for our own!* these words point to the second peculiarity of our task, certainly not the easiest, but perhaps the most important.

The two divisions of our first sketch represent the fundamental principle of the Reformation before Luther and *in* Luther: first, those imposing spiritual and religious movements in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in which the want of a vivifying and

purifying change announced itself more and more urgently, and in varied forms; and then the preparation for this change itself in the mind of Luther.

THE REFORMATION BEFORE LUTHER.

The fifteenth century bore a new order of things in its womb, which, growing out of the gradual decay of the creations of the middle ages, now awaited with increasing struggles the hour of its birth; but this hour, although announced by so many and significant signs, was slow in appearing. A new era working itself forth out of a former one, is an extraordinary spectacle; amidst fierce labours and struggles it tries to assume a new form, and yet cannot find the certain central point round which the new state of things is eventually to be organised and established, victoriously and irrecoverably. In the revolution which had been begun, religion and mental culture occupied the most prominent place: the want of a purification of religious faith and life, or, as it was then called, a reformation of the church in its head and members, became the general cry, the eager demand of all Christians; and never had there been stronger and more urgent reasons for this demand.

The whole order of church-government, as established in the middle ages through the papacy, in its influence on the minds and lives of the people, had

been entirely unhinged; instead of representing the kingdom of heaven upon earth, according to its original design, it fell into annihilating contradiction with the very essence of its existence, and with the most important foundations of all higher moral order. A more fearful and depressing spectacle can scarcely be imagined, than an establishment intended to guide and govern religious interests, meant as a blessing, turned into a curse by the wickedness of men. Such was, at the time of which we speak, the condition of society in Europe: men felt the net in which they were caught, but seemed powerless to break through it, new meshes ever being woven as soon as the old ones were torn asunder.

Religious faith had hitherto represented the clergy ideally as the mediators between God and man, and monastic life as the highest moral elevation of mankind; but now the actual state of things showed, to all that could see, the most offensive and disgusting caricature of this ideal. The clergy of all grades, from the Pope to the meanest priest, intended to be the defenders of religion, had sunk (at least, the great majority of them) into the very lowest depth of depravity. Upon this point only one voice is heard among all serious observers of the time.

Popedom had celebrated its triumphs, through its most powerful representatives, in the subjection of the temporal states, and in strictly carrying out a system

of absolute uniform power. But as early as the fourteenth century a double defeat had followed upon these victories; namely, oppressive dependence upon a temporal power (France), and the destruction of monarchical unity, by the struggles of several pretenders to the papal crown. The highest clerical power thus destroyed itself, ere any of its subjects dared to lay hand on it; indeed, authority firmly rooted in the mind usually falls only by undermining its own power. Still, if these two defeats had been all, popedom might have recovered from them; but by its representatives and by its system, it destroyed all moral faith in both; and such moral self-destruction must lead eventually to external ruin.

The papacy, we say, destroyed itself by its system and representatives. The system bore on its front a conscious and unconditional selfishness, which was stamped especially by the most shameless service of mammon. Judas Iscariot had apparently taken the place of St. Peter. The same spirit which betrayed the Saviour of the world now betrayed the Christian church. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the venality of the popes and their courts had become proverbial. "Dear lord and master," wrote the ambassador of the Teutonic order in the year 1420, to Prussia, "ye must send money; for here at court all friendship's at an end when the money's spent." Again; "Whoever wants any thing

done here must first give money or money's worth, and lay it in the scales. I thought, when I left Prussia, that whoever could undauntedly speak the truth here must and ought to obtain his right; but without money, this will not be the case. It is the common way of the world here,—the more money, the better right. Greed is predominant at the court of Rome, and seeks, by new tricks and arts, to squeeze out day by day more money from Germany for the church fiefs; and great outcries and complaints ensue, and a great dispute about the power of the Pope may be the result; *indeed, all obedience may be refused him*, that all the money need no longer be carried away from us to the Italians: this last, I learn, would cause great satisfaction in many quarters." Thus we hear out of the mouth of a German, a hundred years before Luther, the anticipation of a future secession from Rome. "Do not fear excommunication so greatly," says another account from the same embassy, in 1429; "the devil is not so black as he is often painted, and excommunication is not so terrible as the Popes make it out to us. In Italy, even the lords and princes and cities, who are dependent on the Pope, do not fear unjust excommunication any longer; nor do they like the Pope much in Italy, only so far as he behaves well to them, and no further. We poor Germans alone still imagine him to be an earthly divinity: it were better we thought him an earthly

devil, as he really and truly is!" . . . . "It had been better for me," exclaims another ambassador from Prussia, in 1447, in the most violent indignation, "that I had had my throat cut at Stargard when I was in danger of it, so had not come hither into all this misery and sorrow, nor witnessed all these sins."

A state of corruption such as this could not have existed in the church of Rome, if it had not begun, like an infectious plague, among the highest princes of the church themselves. Every one knows the melancholy notoriety attained by individual popes in the fifteenth century. From John XXIII. (1400) to Alexander (1493 — 1502), a line of princes occupied the papal chair, who exhibited, with few exceptions, a frightful picture of the depravity of a hierarchical body, whose power could not be valid unless based on the confidence of nations in its moral worth. The popes of that period had passed through all the degrees of moral degeneration, — from weakness to duplicity, from vulgar cupidity to complete depravity. We do not intend to turn over again the impure pages of that history; let it suffice to mention, that John XXIII. never entirely cleared himself of the accusation that he had poisoned his predecessor (Alexander V.), or that Innocent VIII. employed the advantages of his position exclusively in providing for his seven children. Of his successor, Alexander VI., it would be better to be silent, rather than depict in

its true colours the history of a life which fills us with horror, and is a disgrace to human nature. Indeed, through him and his children, the name of Borgia has been loaded with the execration of the world; and there is not an abyss of crime, however monstrous, into which he and his family did not fall. In our time it appears astounding, nay sacrilegious, that such depravity could ever exist, without the immediate downfall of the whole ecclesiastical edifice. Only those who can appreciate the power of habit, and the strength of old historical institutions, can find the solution of this apparent mystery.

What has been said of the spiritual head may be applied, almost without reservation, to all the other members of the priesthood, the great majority of whom gave to the Christian world quite as offensive a spectacle as their high-priest at Rome. The reciprocal influence between the clergy and their spiritual prince was, indeed, unavoidable and continuous. An Æneas Sylvius (afterwards Pius II.) could in those days observe facetiously, "that the sheep of Christ were now no longer tended, but only shorn." Perhaps he felt only half, or not at all, the bitter significance and the annihilating truth of his Italian epigram.

The pious Abbot Ruisbrock, again, lamented that, "for a hundred wicked priests, scarcely one good one was to be found; that popes, bishops, and priests bent their knees for the sake of temporal wealth; that

visitations led to no improvements, but that every one concerned got that which he wanted: namely, the devil got the soul, the bishops the money, and the poor stupid human being momentary ease."

"In my opinion," wrote an ambassador of the Teutonic order to his grand-master, "this only is clear, that the churches and clergy are too rich by far; it is an evil that they have more than the holy Apostles had: things will not be better until that which kings and princes have given to the church in olden times, be taken away again from them." Thus early was an open free opinion given, that the riches of the church and the clergy were confided to them under certain moral conditions, and could therefore be reclaimed, to be used for a better purpose, as soon as those conditions ceased to be observed.

Monachism offered a still stronger contrast to the ideal object of its founders; and instead of practising self-denial, humility, and brotherly love, the monks gave themselves up to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, often in their coarsest forms. Convent life, as then understood, had become a mere living on the fat of the land in idleness and sensuality, mostly under the cloak of hypocrisy, but often even with shameless audacity. One of the most respected preachers at Strasburg (Geiler von Kaisersberg, 1478–1516) declares openly: "Convent life had become a mere mockery; convents and monasteries were houses of

seduction; many a pious woman had entered a convent to her undoing. He does not hesitate to use the severe warning words: "When thou seest such a monk, then sign thyself with the cross: if he be black, then is he the devil; if he be white, then is he the devil's mother; but if he be grey, then has he a share in both." This hard judgment of the stern German preacher agrees perfectly well with the testimony of the Roman historian Infessura. As the contemporary of Alexander VI., he assures us, "every one in Rome knows, alas, that monasteries have now become dens of moral corruption."

So fearful and general a demoralisation of the clergy in all its degrees, would naturally produce the most lamentable reaction upon the laity. The same Geiler von Kaisersberg whom we have quoted above, calls the prelates, with unflinching severity, the cause and origin of the destruction of the whole earth. "They lead astray the poor little sheep (*Schäflein*) which follow them. Whoever trusts to this broken reed will fall. Only Christ, the apostles, and the other saints, are the true pillars on which we can lean." Wishing to point out the pernicious influence of the bad example set by the clergy, he illustrates it in his popular way, by referring to the story of the peasant who is climbing a high tree, having a chain of others hanging to his foot, each in turn grasping the foot of the one above him. All are thus safe, until the first, rubbing

his hand in absence of mind, lets go his hold, and down they all tumble with himself. By this peasant (Geiler explains) he meant the prelate, who ought to attain the summit of the tree, *i. e.* the height of Christian life, and persuade his subordinates by an active example to follow him; but as soon as he withdrew heart and hand from the tree of life, he became guilty of the moral apostasy of the whole nation clinging to him.

The sight of this demoralisation among the spiritual teachers of the people, produced as a natural consequence, in the one case, a grievous want of faith; in the other, the dullest superstition. Want of faith, among the better-educated, assumed the form of mere cold abstractions of the mind, or of a course of free, unbridled sensuality. Among such, it was said (by the father of Capito, *e. g.*) that only a fool or a hypocrite could at that time become a priest. Superstition, again, was especially the lot of the poorer and less-educated classes. By means of absurd preaching, false miracles, by a repulsive traffic in relics, and by the establishment of many additional shrines, they were continually taxed and plundered. Both these spiritual perversions—want of faith, and superstition—tended, with equal impetus, to utter demoralisation; which increased so frightfully, year after year, as to call forth the bitterest and most despairing laments from the few noble-minded men of the period. Geiler, who often consoled

himself, as well as others, with the hope that "God would soon send a man for the renovation of their corrupted religion," had at other times to struggle against entire hopelessness: "Thou sayest, Can we not cause a general reformation? I say, no; there is no hope of amendment in Christendom!" What wonder, therefore, that, as ever happens at the threshold of great revolutions, many serious minds became possessed with the idea that the end of the world and the last judgment were approaching; or that others expected a second deluge?

An opposition to this corruption in the dominant church—ever becoming more and more manifest—had arisen in men's minds for centuries, which in many directions amounted not only to a complete rupture with the existing visible church, faithless to its original vocation, but fell gradually into contradiction to the fundamental ideas of Christian revelation.

The violent desire to throw off all ecclesiastical authority, and to break through all religious restrictions, took refuge in Pantheism. Only beyond the reach of hierarchical despotism, and the sphere of historical revelation, did men hope to find freedom in those ideas which represent man as divine by nature, not requiring revelation or atonement. By this means the whole historical foundation upon which not only the church of Rome, but all Christianity as a church, had built itself, was overleapt at a bound. This was

the doctrine professed at a later period by the Beghards* and the Brethren of the Free Spirit, in their secret meetings. Its practical application appeared in an endeavour to re-establish the original nature of man, his first innocence in paradise, and the unconditional equality of all, through the abolition of all distinctions; all the divisions among men, through family, property, community, or church, were to be lost in the divine unity of his original nature. Man needed only to understand and give an unquestioned course of action to his inborn divine nature, and the freedom, innocence, and equality of paradise would reappear of themselves. To use a modern expression, we may say that this movement showed unmistakably the pantheistic communism of the close of the middle ages.

Its principal seat in Germany was Cologne, where also Master Eccard (who held similar religious, if not moral views) taught. Here the secret meetings were held, and the immoral practices carried on, which would not be hidden even in the darkest retreats, and were at length (1325) fully traced and capitally punished.

* A number of artisans at Antwerp united in 1228, under this name, in the performance of certain religious exercises, conforming to the rule of St. Beggha, the mother of Pepin of Heristal. At the end of the thirteenth century they subjected themselves to the order of St. Francis, and at a later period became regular monks. They were exposed to many cruel persecutions, and but few of their monasteries existed in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

From that time, the Brethren of the Free Spirit, wherever they might be found—on the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Baltic—were exposed to the severest persecutions of the church. This doctrine has since been maintained in several periods—during the Reformation, in the last century, and in our own time,—and has always exhibited the same fundamental character: a complete denial of the profoundest laws of individuality, human and divine; and, nearly connected with this, the rudest denial of the most simple and indispensable conditions of human society and civilisation; a denial of the freedom of thought and of legitimate love.

The Brethren of the Free Spirit strove, unsuccessfully and in an eccentric manner, for the radical reform of the church and of social order. There arose at the same time, and also later, a much stronger and more widely-spread party, which cautiously led the attack against existing abuses *within* the limits of history, on a common Christian and ecclesiastical ground. The principal objects of this party were reforms in the constitution and discipline of the church; the remedy was therefore to be sought principally in the amendment and progress of forms and institutions. The unlimited monarchical power in the church had destroyed itself so completely through schism (the co-existence and mutual quarrels of several popes), that the question concerning the legitimate origin of

its supremacy forced itself naturally upon the minds of men. "Not in the pope alone," they said, "but in the bishops, the clerical councils, with or without the pope, was the true source of spiritual power, of ecclesiastical sovereignty, to be found." In other words the church aristocracy placed itself beside the sovereign of the church, and in decisive moments even above him; placing the highest law-giving and judicial authority in a vicarious assembly of all Christian nations.

Out of this spirit arose, in the first half of the fifteenth century, the great councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basle, from which Europe expected the ultimate accomplishment of long-cherished wishes: a reformation of the head and the members; the rooting out of crying abuses in the government and administration of the church. Minds were not lacking which conceived and occasionally gave utterance to the plan of a comprehensive reformation; neither was courage wanting boldly to assert the extraordinary power which the voice of nations had granted. Popes were appointed and deposed with undoubting confidence, almost like presidents of an ecclesiastical republic; and the fundamental idea of a permanent representative constitution, rightfully established, was solemnly carried out.

And yet the efforts of these different bodies of men, although supported by the spirit of the time and by

the voice of the whole Christian civilised world, were fruitless. The reformation from above, longed for and resolved upon, was shipwrecked, partly upon the inevitable contradictions of this representative government without any firmly established organisation, partly upon the resistance and the cunning policy of the papal court, and partly upon the folly of the political powers, and the caprice of the people. A half-century of the most strenuous exertions, of the most hopeful beginnings, was apparently to end in exhaustion and indifference.

At that time the way of salvation had been secured from another side; not through disputes about the constitution and the doubtful boundaries of power between the prince of the church and his ecclesiastical parliament, nor by means of the privileged higher classes and ranks of the clergy, but *through individuals distinguished by their power of persuasion.* With the irresistible power of the inspired *word,* they addressed all Christians, without any distinction of rank or calling—laymen and clergymen, learned and unlearned. A severe moral life, and the simplifying of the external church according to the rule of the oldest Christian community and of the Scriptures, were the two levers with which they hoped to raise Christianity to a state of purity and renovation.

Men like Wickliffe at Oxford, Huss and Jerome at Prague, John von Wesel at Erfurt and on the Rhine

(at Mayence and Worms), and Savonarola at Florence, were the most important leaders of this movement. Almost all of them were martyrs to their cause; the English Wickliffe alone died (1384) unmolested in his village cure, although the English hierarchy, at their council in London, had condemned his doctrine and banished him from the university. Huss and Jerome of Prague suffered a martyr's death in the beginning of the century, as Savonarola at its end,—the two former on the banks of the Rhine, the other on that of the Arno; and John von Wesel died a bowed-down old man in a convent prison. The papal and the representative ecclesiastical powers, the court of Rome and the council of Constance, were agreed in their persecution and condemnation. But through these sacrifices a flame was kindled which no temporal power could quench; the resistance to the corruptions in the church had found a firm and immovable foundation in the authority of the Scriptures as the original record of revelation, also in the undying *word* and blood of the martyred witnesses to the truth. This, however, is at all times the mysterious ever-flowing source of every great advance in history: faith and sacrifice in inseparable union; the divine certainty of conviction, and the sealing it as a faithful sacrifice unto death; the glorifying of thought and of suffering in eternal love.

Hitherto we have spoken of the great attempts at

reformation in the fifteenth century to be obtained, here by an organic reform of ecclesiastical institutions, there through individuals distinguished in the work of reformation; while throughout all a practical reform of external clerical life, its constitution, morals, and manners, was chiefly the object. Now, however, we turn to quieter efforts for obtaining reform, which kept in view less an external than, in the first instance, an internal spiritual reform. In the one case (although the two cannot well be completely separated), the new birth of forms and of external practice was striven for; in the other case, on the contrary, the regeneration of the spirit, heart, and mind was first and principally asserted: in the one case a practical, in the other a theoretical reform predominated. The most important testimony to the origin and internal necessity of these endeavours is, that the reform movements in both the above directions took place almost contemporaneously and with equal power; for only those reforms on a larger scale bear within them the vitality which outlives, which are deep and rich enough to attract the two opposite poles of human knowledge, the spiritual and the temporal, and thus satisfactorily meet the wants of an active as well as a reflective spirit.

The more internal efforts at reformation had their deepest foundation in two of the most important spiritual events of the fifteenth century. The true spirit

of Christianity, liberated from its disfigurement and disguise, from its fetters and materialisation, was recognised and estimated at its real value, in its original truth and freedom; but this liberation had been rendered possible only *through the greater power obtained by the spirit of religion, and by a more vivid comprehension of the original history of Christianity. This greater power of the spirit of religion, and this more liberal comprehension of history, must be looked upon as the two most powerful springs of the spiritual reforms before Luther.* From the depths of this religious feeling, and the moral consciousness inspired by it, as well as from the oldest written documents dating from the establishment of the first church, the Christian spirit drew the means for its renovation, and the church for its second birth; and never have historical knowledge and religious inspiration united in a nobler labour — never have knowledge and faith formed a more beautiful union — than in this dawn of the Reformation.

The historical comprehension of primitive Christianity received, through the happy junction of favourable circumstances, an impetus such as had hitherto been unheard-of and impossible. The revived study of ancient languages, and of classical as well as biblical antiquity generally, furnished the necessary key to the comprehension of the biblical records in the original tongues; and the newly-invented art of

printing served to spread them abroad. A more rapid circulation, and an easier comprehension, went thus hand in hand. It is well known how much Germany owes on this point to men like Agricola, Reuchlin, and Erasmus.

These endeavours after mere language and forms, although of incalculable importance and influence, would not in themselves have opened the very heart of biblical antiquity, or of the original spirit of Christianity, if the liveliest susceptibility for the mysteries of spiritual life and of religious feeling, had not been gradually awakened in another direction.

This last task was accomplished by a body of men who are ordinarily called *the advocates of German mysticism* before the Reformation. It is not a light undertaking, in these days of Babylonian confusion of tongues and ideas, to uphold this innocent expression in its original historical sense, against the most diversified misconstructions. In that free, plain signification, mysticism is nothing but the religion of the heart and of feeling, as distinguished from that other religious sentiment which is founded, in sober cool natures, more exclusively upon moral perception; in more practical natures, again, upon common sense and reflection. Only he who is capable of distinguishing the subtle essence of religion from reflective thought, or active morality, can conceive that peculiar state of the mind which, in history and philosophy, is denomi-

nated mysticism. It is the fulness of spiritual life, which, turning to the eternal origin of all things, derives its sustenance from the pure hidden sources of the soul. This religion of the heart, which, as a clear expression less likely to be misapprehended, we may denominate *mysticism*, rises in poetical natures on the wings of the imagination; while it prevails, in minds pre-eminently moral and tenderly attuned, like a warm breath of feeling, as a gentle comprehension of the entire life of the soul.

The German Christian mysticism of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries appears, on a more general review, as the first important step towards the Reformation, — a first grand effort for the spiritual re-establishment of Christianity. It is, indeed, the natural soil for the growth of religious freedom and profound depth of feeling which obtained at the period of the Reformation; and for a long space of time Luther himself is essentially indebted to it for intellectual nourishment and growth. It insists, on all occasions and with great emphasis, upon individual experience, and the life of religion in the heart; it seeks in the innermost depth of the soul, and by the sacrifice of an active and devoted love, an immediate union with the Supreme Being, immaterial and essential.

Among the most important and influential German advocates of this movement before the Reformation, are Suso and Tauler (the author of *The German*

Theology) in the fourteenth, and Thomas à Kempis in the fifteenth century. The first two drew from the fulness of a spiritual life, rich in experience, such a power of living words, that they influenced men's minds at great distances, and produced a deep impression particularly in the cities on the Rhine, the principal scene of their labours, and awakened in numberless individuals a desire for higher attainments. Suso (1300–1365) relates most gracefully, in his poetical style, "how he had a great desire to become and be called the servant of eternal wisdom; and how, *whenever he heard songs or words of temporal love, or hymns of praise and sweet music*, his heart and wishes were bent upon 'his loveliest love, from whom all love flows.' He thought: 'O God! if I could only once see my beloved, only once get speech of Him!' While he thus strove how far he might see Him *with his spiritual eyes in the express declarations of Scripture*, He manifested Himself to him, shining like the morning star, and like the glittering beams of the rising sun. His crown was eternity, his garment bliss, his word sweetness, his embrace the fulness of joy; He was present yet hidden, reaching above the highest heavens, and touching the lowest depths. He bent down to him lovingly, and spoke kindly: 'My son, give me thy heart.' Ah, heart mine, see whence floweth love and all kindliness; whence cometh all tenderness, beauty, heart-enjoyment, and loveliness. Cometh it not from

the ever-flowing fountain-head of the Divinity itself? Plunge then my heart and mind and courage into the abyss of all good things! . . . . Thus was his soul impressed with the original emánation of all good, in which he spiritually found all that is worthy of love and desire. Then he often felt like a babe held by its mother on her knee, her hands under its arms, striving to reach that tender mother by the motions of its head and body, and testifying its heartfelt joy by its pretty movements: thus his heart often rose to the blissful presence of eternal Wisdom."

Never before Luther was this heart felt apprehension of the Deity expressed in the German tongue more feelingly, more gracefully, or with greater poetical beauty, than in these words of Suso; the warm longing after the substance, not the mere shadow of religion. That which the greatest German poet of modern times meant to express in the celebrated words:

"Man sehnt sich nach des Lebens Bächen;
Ach! nach des Lebens Quelle hin!"*

had previously found the simplest and purest utterance in the mouth of the pious Suabian poet of the fourteenth century.

From a mind like Suso's we may justly expect the whole poetical depth of a religious nature. He praises

---

* "We languish for the streams of life;
Ah! for life's source itself!" *Goethe's Faust.*

the "intelligent Aristotle, the virtuous heathen master," for having found evidence in the well-ordered course of nature of the existence of "one only Lord and Master of all creatures, whom we call God."

"Mortal eye," says Suso, "cannot see him; but he may be seen in his works, for his creatures are like a mirror in which God is reflected; and this recognition we call, therefore, a reflecting or mirroring. So let us reflect upon the great high Master in his works. Look above, and around to all the four quarters of the world;—how vast, how sublime the heavens in their swift course! How nobly the Lord has adorned it with planets, and decked it with the countless number of bright stars! Oh! when the beauteous sun arises cheeringly, unclouded, in the summer-time, how beneficently it then bestows upon the earth fruits and all other good things! How leaf and herb spring forth! how the lovely flowers smile! how wood and heath and meadow resound with the sweet songs of the nightingales and little birds! how all the animals, shut up during the severe winter, rejoice in their release! how all humanity, young and old, frolic joyfully with rapturous delight! Ah, gracious God! if thou be so lovely in thy creatures, how entirely beautiful and delightful art thou in thyself! All cry, Praise and glory to thee, O Lord! fathomless and immeasurable." . . . . . "Now hast thou found thy God, whom thy heart has long sought. Now look upwards,

with glistening eyes, with bright countenance and bounding heart, and view him, the great King of all creatures. See, such reflections soon lead a feeling human being to rejoice; and this rejoicing is a delight which no tongue can express, but which powerfully fills heart and soul."

In abstruse minds, such as Suso's, the religion of the heart appears, if we may express it thus, personal, and influences, with quiet but irresistible power, all susceptible minds that come within its range. We have a portraiture of his mind in his own words: "I was called the faithful father of the poor; I was the particular friend of all that loved God; all that came to me weary and heavy-laden ever found counsel, so that they parted from me cheered and comforted: for I wept with those that were weeping, and mourned with the mourners, until I had consoled them as a mother would her child. If a man wronged me ever so grievously, and only smiled on me kindly afterwards, I was ready to forgive him in God's name, and to forget the offence as if it never had been. Even the wants and sufferings of the little birds and animals, or of any of God's creatures, went to my heart; and I prayed to the pitiful Lord on high that he would help them."

This mildness and loving warmth of his whole character could not, however, prevent his being treated by worldly and hard-hearted persons as a strange nay

a hateful phenomenon: "he converted men," so they reproached him, with violent threats, "into a peculiar eccentric mode of life termed spiritual (*der Geist*); and those belonging to this class, spiritualists (*Geister und Geisterinnen*), the most perverse set that ever lived upon earth." But all this vanished before the power of his life and his preaching. His sermons were often so affecting, that his face appeared to his hearers, as one of them assures us, surrounded by a halo. "Mark ye," so he cried sometimes, at particularly striking passages, in moments of enthusiasm, "the blusterer will bluster."*

The greater power of the living and spoken word, as compared with the written word, he points out in a beautiful passage, quite characteristic of himself: "The difference is as great between a sweet musical instrument played upon, and hearing it only talked about; so unlike are the words conceived in pure grace flowing from a living heart through a living mouth, to the same words written upon lifeless parchment, particularly in the vulgar tongue: in the latter case they become cold and weak, as a plucked rose fades and withers; for the unction which touches the human soul dies away then, and the words fall upon the stony ground of a hard heart. Never sounded chord so sweetly, but is silenced if strung upon a dry board."

* *Der Seuss will säussen;* a play on the word Suso, Seuss, i. e. *der Sausende,* the blusterer.

The degree in which Tauler had influenced Luther is proved by the words of the latter to Spalatin (1516): "If thou takest pleasure in becoming acquainted with the true doctrine as it was received in olden times in the German tongue, buy Dr. John Tauler's sermons. I have never met, either in German or Latin, with a sounder theology, and which agreed more completely with the Gospel. Taste and see how good is the Lord; if thou hast already tasted and seen how bitter all that is that we ourselves are." "Although," he says in another place, "unknown to the divines of the schools, I *know* that Tauler gives us more pure doctrine than all the books of the teachers at the universities."

Tauler (died 1361) knew perhaps in a yet higher degree than Suso how to move the hearts of the people through his powerful preaching in the German language; his words frequently struck his hearers like lightning, and, overpowered by emotion, they fell fainting to the ground. "Imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ" was the key-note of his doctrine, and gave colour to his life. Therefore did the salvation and consolation of individuals outweigh with him the consideration for the self-seeking commands of his ecclesiastical superiors; his heart revolted against allowing the innocent people to die without the consolations of religion on account of papal excommunication. Consequently he taught them to distinguish

between papal and divine commands: "All those who hold the true Christian faith, and sin only against *the person of the pope*, are not heretics; but those are who obstinately act contrary to God's word, and will not amend their ways." Tauler and his friends, the Carthusian priest Ludolph, and Thomas, the vicar-general of the Augustins at Strasburg, taught "that the word of Christ and of the Apostles was more important than papal excommunication, which was fulminated in worldly passion only."

"We succeeded so far," relates his contemporary Specklin, "that the people died in peace, and did not any longer fear excommunication so greatly, while formerly many thousands died without confession, in great despair. . . . . He (Tauler) published many consolatory tracts to be read to the common people in their last moments, at the administration of the sacraments; by which means many priests were rendered truly pious."

From Tauler's connexion also issued a pamphlet in which the relation between church and state was considered, in a sense fundamentally opposed to the strictly papal system which had been maintained hitherto. It said, "There are two kinds of swords, the one spiritual, which is the word of God, the other temporal authority; one independent of the other. But as both are of God, they cannot be opposed to each other. The spiritual sword acts as the word of

God; it defends God's ordinances and people, and punishes evil-doers. If temporal authority were to be condemned by spiritual authority, God would condemn his own work. But when a temporal chief sins, it behoves the spiritual authority to lead the sinner into the right way, in great humility and with unceasing intercession. There is no evidence in the word of God that all must be heretics who will not kiss the pope's feet, or that this is an article of faith. To the emperor, as the highest authority, obedience before all others is due; if he does not govern justly, he must render an account of it to God, and not to poor sinful men. Whoever, therefore, is unjustly excommunicated, his condemnation becomes pardon before God. . . . . The soul belongs to God; body and goods to the emperor."

We see thus, that from this mystical and purely spiritual movement there sprung a resistance to the church, become utterly worldly and formal;—resistance founded upon a higher principle and daily experience. It was a higher principle to appeal to Christ, to the apostles, the Scriptures, the councils, against the ordinances of the pope, the highest priestly authority; or to appeal to the religious as well as moral power of the state against clerical arrogance. These were precisely the pillars on which Luther's edifice was to be erected.

The above-mentioned resistance was founded, we

say, also upon daily experience—upon the revolting spectacle of corruption in the church of the priests; a spectacle which provoked even patient, self-collected souls to expressions of severe condemnation. The important little book, *Of the Nine Rocks* (*von den neun Felsen*), which perhaps originated with Suso, a book intended to teach inquiring souls who wish to turn to God the true way to find him, gives a revolting picture of the corrupt state of Christendom. It describes "how sadly it fared with all men, only a few excepted, and how all Christian order had vanished or been perverted. . . . . Formerly the popes had been seriously anxious for the well-being of Christendom; but now the light of just government had been extinguished in them, as they sought only their own honour and worldly advantage. The cardinals strove only to procure worldly honours for their relations, or themselves to become popes; the bishops loved and cared for riches, honours, and worldly power, more than for the souls for whom God had given his blood. There were no professors who dared speak the truth from their chairs to warn the people, at the risk of their lives. The secular clergy wasted the wealth which had been intrusted to them for religious purposes, in incontinence, gormandising, and vain-glory; all seriousness was extinct and forgotten; they had fallen into a state of complete indifference. In the monasteries nothing but warfare and conten-

tion for power were met with. Among the mendicant friars it was rare to find one confessor who did not seek his own advantage in flattering the people. In convents matters had gone so far, that if one true Christian was found in them, he was obliged to leave on account of the language and wicked lives of the inmates. They derided, and even sought to destroy, any one really converted to eternal truth."

When the author of the little book, *Of the Nine Rocks*, considers afterwards the conduct of the laity, he finds the same faults: among the princes and nobility, pride, wantonness, arrogance, and oppression; among citizens and merchants, avarice, and an incessant restless desire for gain; each wanted to become equal or superior to the other in riches, instead of being satisfied with the needful for themselves and their children. Of the artisans he complains, that "in their pride they seek to climb high above their station, and to place themselves on an equality with those below whom they were stationed according to the laws of God." The peasants he calls ignorant of all godliness, wicked and naughty, of a thoroughly bad heart and mind. "Among women all chastity and feminine modesty had vanished, so that they were more eager and bold for sin than the men."

It is no wonder that such observations should waken in the mind of this man also the thought of approaching destruction, or of an impending brutish

barbarism. "If God meant to destroy the world for its sins as in the time of Noah, he must do it every hour and every day!"

As tokens of such judgments appeared to him the heavy afflictions which befell Europe somewhat more than five hundred years ago (1347–1348), the destructive war between church and state, and the fearful disease called the black sickness (*schwartzer Tod*), which carried off thousands. "God hath kindly and lovingly warned the people in these latter times; but it was of no use, and he has been forgotten." He fears, therefore, that God would permit that one should murder the other, in a state of general barbarism; for already one wanted to rise above the other; sin was no longer looked upon as sin; indeed, for centuries past such wickedness had not been equalled. Tauler also joins him in troubled warnings: "Ye people all, observe seriously and mark with trembling fear the great wrath and the long-merited plagues of God's justice, which fall heavily upon the world in these days, more heavily indeed than for the last four centuries. And it is much to be feared that they will become inconceivably more overpowering and heavy."

Among the important advocates of this mystical party are mentioned, besides Suso and Tauler, the author of *German Divinity*, and Thomas à Kempis.

The little work, *German Divinity*, must be looked upon indisputably as one of the most remarkable

spiritual preparations for the Reformation; as such it produced upon the mind of Luther the very deepest impression. "We read," he writes in his preface to the above work, which he republished in 1518, "that St. Paul, of weak and contemptible bodily presence, wrote yet weighty and powerful letters, and boasts that he came not with excellence of speech and enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power. Also, when one observes the words of the Lord, it is clear that fine and showy preachers are not always chosen to preach his word; but it is written: 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected thy praise.'

"Therefore I say, that I mean to warn every one who readeth this little book, that he may not cause himself an injury by being offended at its bad German and simple style. For this excellent little book, poor and unadorned as it is in words and human wisdom, is nevertheless rich and precious in knowledge and divine wisdom. And I speak foolishly, but I must say, that I have not met with any book, except the Bible and St. Augustin, from which I have learnt and shall learn more of the nature of God, Christ, mankind, and all things. Now I perceive, for the first time, that what several very learned men accuse us Wittenberg theologians of, is true, namely, that we wish to introduce new things, saying people with such sentiments had never before existed any where. Yea,

verily there have been such, but the wrath of God incurred by our sins has not deemed us worthy either to hear or see them; for it is now clear as day, that in the universities nothing of this kind has been done, and that consequently God's holy word has not only been thrown aside under the bench, but almost consumed by dust and moths.

"Let who will read this book, and then say whether our theology is new or old; for assuredly this book is not new. It may be said, perhaps, that we are German divines. Let it be so; I thank God that I have met with my God as I and those with me have never before met with him, either in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew. God grant that this book may become better known; then it will be found that the German theologians are the best divines. Amen."

In old editions we find the author thus alluded to: "The almighty and everlasting God inspired a wise, intelligent, truthful, and upright man, his faithful friend a German gentleman, a priest and custos in the house of the Teutonic Knights at Frankfort, to write this little book, which teaches many a beautiful distinction in divine truth, and particularly how to recognise the true and faithful friend of God, and also the unjust, false, and faithless spirits hurtful to holy church."

We see that Luther greets this little piece of German divinity as one of the purest utterances of

Christian truth, as a source of knowledge which, after the Bible and St. Augustin, enlightened him most on divine subjects. This remarkable work is indeed as pure an attempt as it is bold and profound to deliver Christianity from torpid forms, and revive its spiritual and emotional character. The earnest religious tendency of the German mind thus rid itself gently but firmly from the shackles which had hitherto impeded its progress in divine life and knowledge. The spiritual Christianity of the Saviour of the world rises thus from the infant condition of a fettered and mere formal creed, from the fantastic legends of saints and blind obedience to the dead letter of the law, to a free and inward religion; the religion of the divine Nazarene returns to its true sanctuary, the conscience and the heart.

This is the chief import of *German Divinity*, and on this account only could it occupy so important a place in the history of the development of the German reformer. It repeatedly and plainly insists upon the fundamental character it assigns to *inward* religious experience and practice, and to *individual* faith: "When that which is perfect is come, that which is imperfect shall be done away. But when will it come? I say, *when it is known, felt, and tasted in the soul*, as far as that is possible to a created being." And still more evidently in contrast to a *dead* historical faith; "Also all the works and miracles which

God hath ever wrought or may ever work in and through all creatures, or God himself in all his goodness, *as far as it is and takes place without me, does not make me blessed; but only as it is and happens within me, and is known and loved, felt and tasted by me.*" Sin and redemption, the history of Adam and Christ, the fall and the regeneration of the divine image in human nature, are set forth as the consecutive spiritual history of the human race: "Scripture, faith, and truth say sin is nothing but the turning away of the creature from immutable good to the mutable, from perfection to imperfection, and in most cases to itself. . . . . My fallen state must be restored in the same way as Adam's, and by the same means. God took upon himself human nature and became man, and man became a partaker of the divine nature. Thus is our regeneration secured; and if I am to be restored from my fall, then the God in me must become man in me. God may take to himself all that is so in me from within and without, so that nothing may be within me which resists God or hinders his word in me.

"In justice and in truth, man ought to lay claim to nothing, love nothing, or think of nothing, except God, and him alone, *i. e.* the eternal and sole-perfect Good. In a word, if a man can be towards God what his hand is to himself, he may rest content. This end we can attain only by degrees, as we gradually

ascend from the knowledge and love of the noblest and purest of creatures to the Creator in his perfection. If, then, among created beings, we attach ourselves to the best we can discern, we attain higher and yet higher grades, until we understand and perceive that the eternal and sole-perfect is immeasuraby above all created good.

"There is but one way to this elevation of spiritual life in God,—communion with Christ. Whoever does not reach that highest truth by the right way or the right door, that is to say, through Christ, or who fancies he has attained it without him, will sink into mad license and carelessness. . . . . Neither by much inquiry, nor hearsay, nor by reading and study, nor by profound science, nor the learning of professors, nor great natural gifts of reason, can we attain true knowledge or the life in Christ. . . . Christ himself bears witness to this; he says: 'Whosoever will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me.' Here he means to say: 'Whoever will not forsake and lose all things, can never truly know me nor attain to my life.'

"And if the mouth of man had never spoken it, yet truth did it of itself, for it is so in truth. . . . . No one can be enlightened, unless he be previously purified, cleansed, and freed; neither can any one be in communion with God, unless enlightened. There are thus three ways, — purification, enlightenment, communion.

"If we speak of the old and the new man, it is to be understood that the old man is Adam, and disobedience, selfishness, and egotism; but the new man is Christ and obedience. . . . For true obedience man was and is created, and owes it to God; and this obedience died and was lost in Adam, but arose again in Christ. . . . . Indeed the human nature of Christ stands alone, apart from itself and from all things, as no other creature, and was no other than a tabernacle and habitation of God and of all that belongs to God. . . . . Whoever lives in obedience and in the new man, is the brother of Christ and the child of God. . . . . Whoever lives in disobedience lives in sin, and sin is never repented of nor forsaken but by returning to obedience; and if man return to true obedience, then he is penitent and forgiven. And if the devil could attain true faith, he would become an angel, and all his sin and wickedness would be forgiven at once. . . . . If it were possible for a man to be so wholly pure, free from self and from all things in the true obedience, as Christ was in his humanity, that man would be without sin, and also united in Christ, and he would be that by grace which Christ was by nature. But it is said, that cannot be; yet it is possible for man to approach a divine state and to be called godly. . . . . Whoever knoweth and understandeth the *life* of Christ, knoweth and understandeth also Christ himself; and as much of the life

of Christ as exists in man, as much is Christ in him; and as little as there is of the one, so little is there of the other. . . . . Mark, one word or two; embrace all this which otherwise must be expressed in many words: be pure, and wholly free of self."

It was necessary, for our object, to refer thus largely to these and other fundamental ideas of the work entitled *German Divinity*, because one of the most important elements of the culture of our reformer was involved in it.

In conclusion, we have yet to mention, among the German co-operators in the Reformation before Luther, the author of *The Imitation of Christ* (*Nachfolge Christi*), Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471), who died twelve years before Luther's birth. The history of his mental progress and influence point in their origin to Ruisbröck (1293–1381), in their effects to Wessel, and through him to Luther.

John Ruisbröck lived in the forest solitude of his monastery at Gruenthal, near Brussels, in deep contemplation and exalted thought. He was visited there by two men, each of whom became afterwards a spiritual salt for his respective country,—Tauler for Germany, and Groot for the Netherlands. The minds of both were deeply affected by their intercourse with the venerable Christian seer, which aided in giving the decisive colouring to their future proceedings.

Gerard Groot, a native of Deventer (1340–1384),

became known in his own country as an honest, powerful, and affecting preacher to the people, and also as a zealous reformer of morals; but when the solemnity of his addresses to the people became obnoxious to a large, corrupt portion of the clergy, he obeyed the orders of his ecclesiastical superiors, and withdrew to a more private and circumscribed sphere of action. But even here he was destined to be of the greatest importance, not only to his country, but to humanity. In his retirement he founded the Communist Brethren (*Brüder vom gemeinsamen Leben,*); those Christian unions and establishments which exercised, during the century before the Reformation, the most beneficial and extensive influence over the religious education and spiritual awakening of the people in the Netherlands and in Germany.

The idea of establishing a society for true Christian communion and brotherhood in his native city was first conceived by him during his visit to Ruisbröck in the monastery at Gruenthal (1378), on witnessing the beautiful united and brotherly life of the canons there. The work begun by Groot received the necessary completion and extension through his pupil and successor, Florentius Radewin (1350–1400); and under the direction of this man, young Thomas à Kempis was educated and fitted for his future task as the spiritual teacher of thousands,—so little dreamt of by him in his humility.

We have no traces, it is true, of any immediate important influence exercised by the writings of Thomas à Kempis upon Luther; but it may be traced through the man who must be accepted as the spiritual connection and mental point of junction between Thomas à Kempis and Luther,—John Wessel (1419–1489), the greatest German theologian among the advocates of the Reformation of the fifteenth century. Wessel had received his early education, and become acquainted with the grey-haired Thomas à Kempis, who lived in the monastery of St. Agnes, at the neighbouring house of the Communist Brethren at Zwoll. The little work, *The Imitation of Christ*, which Kempis was then engaged in writing, became to him, Wessel himself states, the powerful incitement to piety, and a foundation of sound divinity. This true religion of the heart, this love without selfishness, nourished in the young Wessel the warmth indispensable to the fulfilment of that task which eventually made him the German reformer of the fifteenth century, the spiritual precursor and theological brother in the faith of Luther. Luther speaks of him with unequivocal admiration (1522): "Wessel now also comes to light as a man of great intellect and lofty mind, such as is not often found; and it may be seen that he is really taught by God, as Isaiah had prophesied of such Christians. For it cannot be said that he derives his doctrine from man, any more than I do.

If I had read Wessel's work earlier, my enemies might think that I had taken all my doctrine from him, so well do our spirits agree. This causes me great joy and increased strength; and I doubt no longer that I have taught truly, because he agrees with me so entirely in sense and almost in words, although he wrote at a different time, when other breezes blew."

In all that we have hitherto stated we see a series of great preparatory labours, neither undertaken by caprice or obstinacy, nor conceived by individual schemes or self-conceit, but the providential result of the progress and influence of history; a chain forming itself gradually and invisibly of numberless spiritual links, which in the end received in the heroic soul of Luther, as in a granite column, a central point of support, from whence it extended itself in all directions to form the frame of a new epoch.

In this sense we have spoken of a reformation before Luther; let us now see the shape it took in Luther.

THE REFORMATION IN LUTHER.

How was he educated for his task,—he who was to be so powerful an instrument for the regeneration of the world?—Above all, through the severe training of external, and the ardent struggles of internal, life.

In the humiliating privations of poverty, under the strict and often severe hand of parental and school discipline, was the child of the Mansfeld miner to be steeled, body and mind, for his great work. Luther, like many others of our greatest men, had sprung from the kernel of our nation—the peasants and burghers. He was the son of a peasant from the Thuringian village Mocra, who, most likely with a view to obtaining more remunerative labour (the legend says, in consequence of some act committed in the heat of passion), had gone to reside first at Eisleben, afterwards at Mansfeld, where he became, by slow degrees and painful labour, if not a rich man, at least easy in his circumstances. In the same manner as many of our noblest spirits rise from the poverty and bitter want of their youth to importance and power, so Luther also learnt in early childhood "to eat his bread in sorrow." "My parents," he relates, "were at first really poor. My father was a woodcutter, and my mother carried the wood for sale on her back; by this means they fed us children; they struggled hard." In his earliest youth, as soon as he was capable of receiving religious impressions, the germ of that earnest and heartfelt piety was implanted in his soul, which became afterwards the most distinguishing characteristic of his life: the example of his vigorous severe father, and pious serious mother, effected this without many words. Their severity,

however, degenerated sometimes to improper harshness: "My father flogged me so severely one day, that I fled, and took a dislike to him, which he could only gradually overcome by kindness; my mother, again, beat me one day for some worthless nut, until my blood flowed; and their serious strict manner of living made me run away afterwards into a monastery and become a monk. They meant well, but did not know how to adjust or measure punishment."

Still, no one knew better than himself how much he owed to the training both of poverty and of parents: "It is a great kindness not to let children have their own way, whether you check them by threats or by flogging. . . . . It is also a great cruelty, nay a horrid murder, if a father does not punish his child: if thou dost not flog thy son, he will become a villain, and Master Hans* will have to punish him with his deadly rod. Those who humble themselves and suffer, will grow up to be somebody; but those who are proud and do not submit to punishment, will go to destruction." Again alluding to the moral strengthening through poverty and privation, he says: "The children of rich people rarely turn out well: they are confident, bold, and proud; they think they need learn nothing, because they have enough to live on without it. On the contrary, poor people's sons have to raise themselves from the dust; they

*The executioner; in English, Jack Ketch.

must suffer much; and as they have nothing to boast of or to rely on, they learn to have confidence in God, they bow down and are silent. The poor fear God; therefore does God give them good intellects, that they may study and learn well, become sensible and clever, and able to impart of their wisdom to princes, kings, and emperors." Such observations as these are doubtless inspired by the grateful remembrance of his own youthful life and education.

Not only in his home, but also in the school at Mansfeld, was he often treated with tyrannical severity, so that it became for him "hell and purgatory, in which we were tormented with *casualibus* and *temporalibus*, and yet learnt nothing, positively nothing, with all the flogging, trembling, fear, and misery."

In his fourteenth year (1497) he left Manfeld in company with his schoolfellow John Reinecke, and visited the school of the Franciscans at Magdeburg. A year later he proceeded to Eisenach, the birthplace of his mother Margaret. There he enjoyed very superior instruction (until 1501) in the high school attached to the church of St. George (most likely from the gentle rector Trebonius). He only now felt the real desire to acquire knowledge; and his progress was soon after rendered easy by the kindness of Mrs. Ursula Cotta, who relieved him from the bitter want of the necessaries of life. At Magdeburg, and at first at Eisenach, he had had to beg his bread,

singing in the streets, until that benevolent matron received the pious melancholy boy at her table, and perhaps also into her house. This conferred many blessings upon him; the language and conduct of this kind-hearted and intelligent woman first inspired him with the ideal of a truly Christian family; and in her house he also learned music, from which art he derived, next to the Scriptures, the sweetest consolation.

When he left Eisenach, in 1501, to study at the university of Erfurt, there languished, imprisoned in the monastery adjoining his school, one of the men who had prepared the way for him, the Franciscan monk Hilten, a spiritual relation of Savonarola's, as yet unknown to Luther, who prophesied to his oppressors the advent of the hero: "He will attack you monks with vigour, and him ye will be uuable to withstand."

The young student distinguished himself during his academical career at Erfurt (1501–1505) by persevering industry, moral purity, and piety. He took a degree in philosophy (*magister*) as early as 1505; and now his father, who had grown rich in the mean time, wished him to study the law; but he defeated all these plans and wishes by suddenly entering the monastery of the Augustines at Erfurt, and taking the vows. Here we stand at the all-important turning-point of his life, which we must comprehend in its innermost significance, if we wish to understand

LUTHER DISCOVERS THE LATIN BIBLE IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AT URFURT.

correctly the depths of Luther's inward being, and his entire future development.

The discipline of external, and the severe struggles of internal life, we said, educated him for his task. These struggles of his soul led him into the monastery; and there they attained a climax. As he did not attempt to set aside the spiritual and religious authorities of his day with contemptuous indifference, but grappled with them honestly and seriously, the experience of his own heart and mind soon taught him that he could not draw from them the living water for which his soul languished. The more sincerely he strove for inward satisfaction, the more painfully was he convinced that the then existing accredited religious institutions were abandoned by the life-giving spirit. His coming into immediate mental conflict with those spiritual powers which stopped up and darkened the way to the truth which he sought, was of decisive importance. In monachism, scholastics, and in priestly hierarchy, he sought in vain for true peace to his soul—for real satisfaction and divine contentment.

The spiritual man approaches the victory of the divine principle, life in eternal ideas, by three distinct paths. Communion with God, the reality of eternal life in man, is conceived either as moral, æsthetic, or speculative consciousness. We may say religion manifests herself irresistibly in every reflective being as a

moral requirement, or as æsthetic or intellectual intuition. The first of these paths we call the *ethic*— the irresistible holy impulse the conscience feels to fill up, by some means, the great gulf between holiness and sin, between the blessed simplicity of the divine will and our unhappy, distracted, and defiled condition. The second path is the *æsthetic* — the lively perception of eternal beauty in the most diversified phenomena of existence; the inspired perception of the divine secret of nature, of art, and of life. We indicate the third path as the logical progress towards the oneness of thought, the conception of the truth in its creative ruling centre; that striving of the mind thirsting after knowledge, which feels itself as it were banished when in the wretchedness of error and doubt.

The more freely the religious consciousness is unfolded, the more evident will be its progress in the different paths; and it will plunge again and again into the three springs of all spiritual life, from whence flows true religious individuality. Although, according to eternal laws, one of them may predominate, yet the complete want of one or another will ever affect us as a decay of a noble part, or the mutilation of the spiritual organism. *Moral consciousness is the one indispensable creating and restrictive element of inward religion, which may for a time exist through it alone, independent of the two other elements; these, how-*

ever, would but with difficulty preserve the vitality of the religion of the heart.

In Luther we recognise great natural capabilities for a union of these fundamental principles of man's spiritual nature; *but the ethic principle showed itself most powerfully and decisively in the ardent and unappeasable claims of his conscience;* hence arose his vocation as a reformer. His energetic mind would admit no obscuration, falsifying, or deceptive explanation of the enormous contrast which an awakened conscience perceives between human imperfection and sin, and the divine perfection and holiness. He did not rest until he had attained, by unspeakable troubles, doubts, and sufferings, to a satisfactory reconciliation of the difficulties of this contrast. He found it (anticipating our subject) in the belief in the grace of God through Christ. *"Justification through faith," God's free grace in Christ,*—this became the clear and leading idea of his life, and of the reformation he originated. The abyss between the holy Creator and his sinful creature was bridged over for him by a new comprehension of the Saviour, at once historical and ideal; by a saving view of the profound import of the Gospel, as an immeasurable inward experience prevailing through all ages. *Christianity, as history and idea, drawn freshly from its original eternal sources, stood before him like the newly-discovered land of his soul's desire:* no longer as a rigorous law, depressing and paralysing the soul;

but as the divine capacity to a new spiritual life, as a second birth of the will, and therefore of the entire man.

The above will furnish, in the outset, the most satisfactory explanation of the course of Luther's religious development to his disputes with Rome; the internal history of that which in our introduction we have called "the Reformation *in* Luther." His entrance into the monastery is to us the first important step towards this development. What induced him to this step was, unmistakably, a burning desire for salvation, for a degree of moral and religious perfection which he thought could only be reached in a monastery. That he was influenced in the first instance, in his view of human salvation and reconciliation with God, by purely monastic ideas, was in reality the cause of his becoming a monk.

The terror he experienced when the lightning fell close beside him, — the death of his friend in a thunderstorm, — in short, every impression, every event which brought death, eternity, and judgment strongly before his mind, caused him to tremble in his innermost heart. In this condition of mind he felt that he could not stand before the eternal Judge; only the holy dare approach the Holy one. But where find holiness, if not in the monastery?

That such was his predominant train of thought can be proved by his own words: his description of a

picture which was meant symbolically to represent the monastic conception of the Christian church, is characteristic of the ideas which he entertained in his youth: "They had painted a great ship, called the 'Holy Christian church;' *therein sat no layman*, nor kings, nor princes; only the pope, cardinals, and bishops in the prow, below the Holy Ghost; and monks and priests at the sides, at the oars; and so they sailed towards heaven. But the laymen were swimming in the waters round the ship: some were drowning; a few dragged themselves towards the ship by ropes and cables which the holy fathers threw out to them from their great goodness, allowing them to share in their good works, and helping them, that they might not be drowned, but reach heaven clinging to the ship. And there was no pope, cardinal, nor bishop in the water, but only laymen. Such a picture was an image and brief conception of their doctrine respecting the laity, and it is the same picture which they had in their books; this they cannot deny. For I have been myself one of those fellows who have helped to teach this, and have believed and not known otherwise."

The words of a later letter to his father are equally significant: "This is now nearly the sixteenth year of my monkery, into which I entered without your knowledge. . . . . I remember but too well, when we had been reconciled and you talked to me, and I said

to you that *I had been called by a dreadful apparition from heaven*; *for I became a monk not willingly, still less to fatten my body, but because, when I was encompassed by quick-coming death, I vowed a forced and hasty vow;* and you said immediately, 'I pray God it may not be a devilish spirit.' That word, as if God had spoken it out of your mouth, pierced and sank deep into my soul; but I closed and barred my heart as well as I could against you and your word."

All his observations at different times agree in this: "I thought, 'Oh, if I go into a monastery, and serve God in shaven crown and cowl, he will reward and welcome me!' For no other reason did I enter orders, but that I might serve and please God everlastingly. We knew nothing that a Christian ought to know,—what God, the world, the church, sin or forgiveness of sin, meant;—they had darkened and suppressed all. We knew not otherwise than the priests and monks were all in all; and upon their works we stood, and not upon Christ. . . . . When I had begun to study the humanities and philosophy, and had learned and acquired enough to take my degree, I might have followed the example of others, and have in my turn taught the young people and instructed them; or I might have proceeded with my own studies. But I left my parents, relations, and friends, and went into a monastery against their will. For I had been persuaded to believe that I should do

God good service in that station by such hard and painful works. . . . . Every man has a big monk sitting in his bosom; that is, we would willingly boast of our exceedingly good works, and be able to say: 'Behold, I have done this! I have to-day paid God with prayers and good works.' We deem ourselves pure by nature, so as not to stand in need of mercy, but be acknowledged just and pious through our own merits. This naughtiness and hypocrisy is deeply rooted in our flesh."

And what did he find in the monastery? Did he there attain to the blessed peace of mind which a vague mysterious presentiment had fore-shadowed? Instead of the much-hoped-for peace, his distress and trouble of mind increased during the first years. In vain brother Augustine (as he was now called) submitted to the meanest exercises of humiliation, now doing the menial work of the monastery, now traversing the streets of Erfurt with the beggar's wallet, collecting alms for it; in vain he increased the castigations of his body, fasting, praying, watching to excess; in vain he studied the Latin Bible with the spiritual hunger of a mind eager for salvation, but without the indispensable key to the understanding of the Scriptures, — that Bible he had so longed to become thoroughly acquainted with while at the uni-

versity, on seeing it for the first time! In vain; he felt himself separated from God by an abyss, which deepened the more, the more he strove, with suicidal agony and effort, to fill it up by his own spotless sanctity. He describes the condition of his mind at that period in these words:

"When I first became a monk, I would willingly have taken heaven by storm; I thought my monkery would suffice. In all this, what did I seek but God? who was to see how I kept the rules of mine order, and the strict life I led? I lived continually in a dream and in real idolatry. It is true I have been a pious monk, and so strictly kept by mine order, that I may say, if ever a monk reached heaven through monkery, I ought to have gone also: this all the brethren of the monastery who have known me will bear witness to; for if it had lasted much longer, I should have tormented myself to death with watching, praying, and other works of devotion. In popery we mad saints have made one ordinance after another, and no end of rules; they have served to terrify the conscience, and caused the people to thirst for the truth,—a thirst which their preachers have done nothing to allay. When I was a monk, I crucified Christ every day, and slandered him by the false confidence which at that time clove to me. It is true I was not like other people; outwardly I kept my vows of chastity, neither did I trouble myself concerning

the things of this life. . . . but beneath this sanctity and false confidence, I felt in the integrity of my own heart continual mistrust and doubts, fear and hatred, and I even blasphemed God. When a monk in the monastery, I was outwardly much more sanctified than I am now; . . . . my life had great glory in the eyes of the people, but not in mine own eyes, for I had a broken spirit and was ever sorrowful. . . . . My experience when a monk was this: while grievously tormenting myself with watching and studying, doubts still remained in my conscience: who knows, thought I, whether all this be really agreeable and pleasing to God or not? When I was most devout, I still approached the altar in unbelief, and in unbelief I withdrew from it. If I had made confession, I still doubted; and if I omitted it, I fell into despair: for we were so miserably deluded, that we thought we could not pray, and would not be heard, unless we were pure and free from sin, like angels in heaven. As a monk, I deemed myself lost when I felt a desire of the flesh, such as unchastity, or wrath, hatred, envy, &c. against a brother. I tried many remedies; I confessed every day; but it was of no use, — the desires revived again. Therefore I could not be satisfied, but tormented myself continually with such thoughts as these: 'Behold, thou hast committed such and such sin . . . . therefore it is of no avail that thou hast taken holy orders; all thy good works are

naught!' The greatest temptation of the devil is that when he says: 'God is the enemy of sinners; thou art a sinner; therefore is God thine enemy.' If in this case we do not make the distinction that God is the enemy of the unrepentant sinner only, conscience lies conquered, and we despair. When conscience is told the law must be fulfilled, must be kept,—it concludes from that hour, thou must keep the law, or thou art condemned; thou hast not kept it, thou *canst* not keep it! Then begin everlasting agony and pangs of conscience. . . . . The word *righteous*, and *the righteousness of God*, were to me like a clap of thunder. Formerly, in popish times, we cried for eternal salvation and the kingdom of the Lord; we have sought it, and knocked day and night. I myself, if I had not been saved through the consolations of the Gospel of Christ, could not have lived two years longer, so much did I torment myself, striving to flee from the wrath of God; neither were tears and sighs wanting; but we did not attain to any thing with all this. A monk with his masses and his many other works either becomes self-righteous or he despairs. As an experienced monk, having striven earnestly to be one, I may truly call monkery an infernal poisoned pill covered with sugar. For, the consolatory promise, that a man could make himself spiritually alive and blessed without the intervention of Christ and his Holy Spirit, was beyond measure sweet to hear, and

tasted richly to the mind; indeed, we meant to go to heaven, and gain the kingdom of heaven by stealth. . . . . That was the sugar which enticed us to monkery and its baptism. Afterwards, when we had swallowed the pill, we found the poison,—that Christ was lost, and was now no longer a saviour and comforter, but a wrathful judge in our hearts; and were tormented by fears, doubts, and terror. . . . . To sum up all,—a monastery is a hell."

As seriously and severely as he sought to embody monachism in himself, so highly did he regard his consecration as a priest (1507); but this rather increased his fear and terror, instead of leading him to better knowledge and peace of mind. Even while celebrating his first mass, he was nearly overcome by inward shuddering and horror when he came to the words in which he was to offer up "to Almighty God this spotless sacrifice" for his own and others' sins, for the living and the dead. He felt, "How can I address the high majesty of God, when men tremble before a king even?" This inward trouble afflicted him for a long time. "The ungodly," he writes at a later period, "do not see and feel the wrath of God; they live on without fear. A man who fears God and believes in him, however, feels at all times more sin than grace, more wrath than love of God; the more pious he is, the more he feels the struggle of the flesh against the spirit. I was very pious in the monastery,

and yet even sorrowful, because I thought God was not merciful unto me. I celebrated mass and prayed, and after confession and mass I could never be satisfied in my heart. . . . . I have been a monk for fifteen years, have daily said masses and read the Psaltery, so that I knew it by heart. . . . . And never did I get so far with all these masses, prayings, and watchings, that I could have said, 'Now I am certain that God is merciful unto me.' It is no wonder that in popish times people should have feared and been horrified at the sacrament, for they perverted the sweet and lovely sacrament with gall, wormwood, and vinegar; they have taught us we must be so pure, that not one grain of dust of daily sin should cling to us; this I could not discover in me, and therefore I was frightened at the sacrament. *And this terror, which I have learnt in popish times, and to which I have become accustomed, clings to me even to this day*, although I should now approach it joyfully. When I meant to take the sacrament, I thought if I could only remain free from sin for one hour, that I might receive the sacrament worthily; therefore was it my use and wont, when I had prayed the appointed time and said mass, to close always at the end with these words: 'I come to thee, my dear Lord Jesus, and I pray thee to deign to accept all that I have done and suffered in mine order as a set-off against my sins.' I had chosen one-and-twenty saints, said mass every day, and addressed

three of them, so that they reached out the week; and particularly did I pray to the holy Virgin, because her woman's heart might be more easily moved to reconcile me to her Son. Thus were we who longed to live a righteous life tormented by the pope, who, by means of his monks, makes such countless snares wherewith to entangle consciences."

In those days he still looked upon the authority of the pope and of the church of Rome with the same deep veneration as the monks and priests; with feelings of the most unconditional subjection, peculiar to ardent believers in the middle ages. He might easily have degenerated into a fanatical judge of heretics, into a zealous persecutor like Saul, if occasion had served. "If ever there was one," he says himself, "who, before the re-appearance of the light of the Gospel, deeply revered the pope's laws and the traditions of the fathers, and zealously strove for them in great seriousness, esteemed them and the keeping of them a sanctuary, burned for them, and deemed them necessary to salvation, truly it was I. So great was the pope's authority with me, that I considered the deviating from him in the very least article a sin worthy of eternal damnation; and this godless idea caused me to look upon Huss as so damnable a heretic, as to make it a heavy sin only to think of him; and to defend the authority of the pope I would willingly have lighted up a fire myself to burn the heretic, and

believed I had shown the strictest obedience to God in so doing." He says he sincerely revered the pope, and in those days he would readily have torn with his teeth any one who would have persuaded him to the faith he afterwards embraced. "If any one," he asserts in one place, "in the time when I was a pious holy monk, and said mass every day, and knew not otherwise than that I was walking in the right path straight to heaven, had told me that all this sanctity was of no avail, and that I was an enemy of the cross of Christ, I should willingly have assisted in carrying stones and wood to stone such a Stephen to death, or destroy him by fire."

This series of confessions will afford to every reader at all familiar with the phenomena of spiritual life a clear insight into Luther's state of mind. He was still entirely under the dominion of those priestly forces against which he arose afterwards with such mighty power, and whose downfall was mainly brought about by him. A thorough monk, priest, and Romish scholiast, he struggled, with exhausting efforts, gradually to free himself from these deep religious impressions. He had embraced with passionate energy those forms of the church imposed by the spirit of hierarchy and monachism, which at that period were spiritually defunct; yet he was the very man destined successfully to attack and vanquish these forms. He began his labours, *not by dissenting*

from them, not by casting off the religious ordinances of the time; on the contrary, he began with the most humble subjection to them, with the most ardent desire to accept them wholly. And even when his inward experience and growing knowledge, after overcoming the extreme of confusion, compelled him to throw them off, he raised himself to this recantation only by the power of a more heartfelt and solemn conviction. If the agonising cries of conscience, the spiritual thirst after truth, had not stirred him; if they had not, although misunderstood for a long time, directed him day and night from stale and turbid waters to the living fountains, Martin Luther would have remained, without doubt, one of the most zealous monks of the sixteenth century.

When in later years he called his monastic life *lost years;* when he lamented that he had there lost the salvation and bliss of his soul and the health of his body; he took only one view of the case, and did not duly estimate the importance of these years. The horror which seized him when looking back from a higher and freer position, to the obscure and gloomy conditions of a period of his life now left behind him, was natural; it was a sensation such as may be experienced by those who have exchanged the oppressive air of a prison for the life-giving breezes of the mountains.

At other times he clearly recognised that even

these sad and soul-destroying years formed a necessary part of the entire course of his experience and culture. Later he frequently expressed himself to the effect, that he owed it to those temptations that he had been compelled to search more and more deeply; that the holy Scriptures could not be comprehended without experience and study; temptation, he said, is the chivalry of Christians. God does not choose bold presumptuous persons to do his work upon earth, but those who have been well tried, smoothed, and broken in. In the poetical expressions of a child-like mind, he seeks to unfold the spiritual direction he had received: "If God means to try us, he causes many obstacles to be thrown in our way, *that we may not at once trace his dealings;* as one sports with a little worm, throwing a rod or a leaf before it where it creeps, that it may not be able to go straightforward, but has to turn hither and thither in different directions, ere it get away at last. But we do not understand this method of divine mercy in the beginning, and interpret the very blessings which are placed before our eyes as the means of our destruction."

At Eisenach the kindness of Mistress Cotta had helpfully met the poor scholar. At Erfurt the gentle Dr. Staupitz held out a saving hand to the monk hungering after righteousness and peace; he prepared a new turning-point in his religious experience and in

his life. We learn from Luther's own words, that "the light of the Gospel first shone in the darkness of his heart through the words of Staupitz."

He did not find in the monastery, among his companions, the assistance, the spiritual advancement, which he sought so eagerly; they could not properly comprehend his mental afflictions. He himself complains: "No one could comfort me under those fearful temptations I had to bear, which consumed my body and breath, and often made me doubt whether I had any brains remaining in my head. Those to whom I complained knew nothing of such temptations; and I often cried; 'Is it I alone, then, who have to bear this affliction?'" The brethren of his monastery sought to console him with simple words, probably under the direction of the vicar-general Staupitz. "Knowest thou not," said his preceptor on one occasion, "that our Lord himself has commanded us to hope and to believe?" At confession, one of the brethren called out to him: "Thou art a fool! God is not angry with thee, thou art angry with him: be not thou wrathful with him, and he will be less angry with thee!" Another time, an old monk, to whom he confessed, referred him very impressively to the article of the Apostles' Creed on the remission of sins, and to portions of the homilies of St. Bernard, in order to convince him that he also might obtain the remission of sins which is pronounced in the absolution.

It was, however, reserved for the fatherly exhortations of Staupitz to produce a decisive impression upon the soul of Luther. In the remarkable letter to Staupitz (dated 1518), in which he gives a brief summary of his inward history to the period of the dispute concerning the indulgences, he says, that when Staupitz taught him that "*true repentance began with the love of righteousness and of God,*" while those conscience-tormentors, the scholiasts, taught that it (true repentance) ended with it, it appeared to him "*like a voice from heaven.*" This word had *clung to him like an arrow sped by a strong man;* and he had found in the Scriptures, on carefully studying them, its fullest confirmation; so that thenceforward no expression in the Scriptures sounded in his ear more sweetly than the word *repentance,* which, so long as his love of God was fancied or forced, had been the bitterest of all; "for the laws of God become sweet unto us when we read and understand them, not only in books, but in the wounds of our precious Saviour." It is evident from these words, that he lays the greatest weight upon the fact that the living knowledge of Christ as the Saviour of the world had been revealed to him only through the correct understanding of the word *repentance;* and that he owes the first key to this knowledge to the fatherly counsel of Staupitz.

This gentle friend prepared the agonised soul of Luther for the consolations of Augustin and of Ger-

man mysticism, both emanating from the Christian religion as explained by St. Paul and St. John—the religion of a loving heart, and of tried spiritual experience.

Even Staupitz could not at once comprehend the spiritual condition of his unhappy friend. When Luther confessed to him the very foundation of his difficulties (*den rechten Knoten*), he did not understand him at all, and gave him a most dreadful shock: he says, "Then I became a mere dead body." At meals Staupitz attempted to cheer him thus: "Ye are sad, brother Martin. I have never experienced temptations like thine; but, as far as I can understand thee and them, all thou needest is better eating and drinking. God hath not sent these good things to thee in vain; without them, thou canst do no good." "He imagined," says Luther, "that I, being learned, might become proud and self-sufficient without these temptations." And when he complained that he had been much shocked during a procession at the host which Staupitz had carried, the latter replied: "Alas! thy thoughts are not of Christ; for Christ frighteneth not, but only consoleth."

On one occasion, when he had given vent to his griefs in writing, "My sins! my sins! my sins!" the vicar-general said in answer: "Thou strivest to be free from sin, and hast yet no real sin; make a register of what are sins in reality, and do not deal in such

paltry fancies, or deem every trifle a sin, if Christ is to help thee. . . . . Thou makest thyself a sinner in thy fancy, and then seekest an equally fancied Christ to be thy Saviour. Take to heart that Christ is the real true Saviour, as thou art a real sinner." Luther's doubts and speculations upon predestination, and whether and upon what grounds any one might look upon himself as saved or rejected by God, were also corrected by Staupitz. "Predestination is to be found and understood in the wounds of Christ,—nowhere else; for it is written: 'Hear ye Him!' The Father is too high: therefore he says: 'I will show you a path by which ye may come unto me, namely Christ: believe in him, cling to him, and *ye will find in due time who I am?*' For God is incomprehensible, and we cannot conceive or understand what he is, still less what are his purposes; he is not to be comprehended; and, in short, he will not be known, except through Christ. Therefore set Christ well before you; then predestination is assured, and thou art already elect." This is clearly the language of theological experience, of the religion of the heart, intended to lead Luther from his exhausting spiritual torments and profound speculations back to the simplicity of the Gospel; it is the language of that unobtrusive but steadfast piety which opposes *facts*, the experiences of faith working by love, *to theoretical questions* foreign to its true spirit.

On this subject Luther wrote even in the year 1542 to the Count Albrecht of Mansfield: "It would grieve me to the heart if your lordship should be troubled with these thoughts and temptations, for I myself have been troubled with them; and if Dr. Staupitz, or rather God through Staupitz, had not helped me out, I should have been overwhelmed by them, and been long ago in hell. For such devilish thoughts cause faint-hearted people to become desperate and to despair of God's mercy: or they are bold and courageous, become blasphemers and enemies, and say: 'Let come what may, I will do as I like, for all is lost!'" How gladly he quotes, even at a still later period, those words of his fatherly friend which had been especially consoling to him: "Dr. Staupitz used to say: God's law says to man, Here is a great mountain, cross it; then the flesh and presumption say, I will; but conscience cries, Thou canst not! I give it up, answers despair! Thus the law begets in man either presumption or despair." Again he recalls the deep impression which the confession of that humble-minded man made upon him: "I have vowed to our Lord God more than a thousand times that I would be holy; but I have never kept that vow, and I know that I shall never keep it. Therefore I will not any longer resolve upon being holy, for I see well that it is impossible; I will lie no more; I will pray for a blessed death. If God be not merciful unto me for Christ's

sake, I shall not stand the test with all my vows and good works, but must be lost." Luther calls this a glorious speech: "It has given me *a new light* (eine neue Kunst), *that my own righteousness can avail nothing before God.*"

And even then he approached this truth only by slow degrees, with dear-bought victories over constantly-recurring obstacles and doubts. *But this slow and painful birth of saving knowledge is the most significant event, followed by the most important consequences, in Luther's spiritual history;* and upon the lively comprehension of which, a just appreciation of him and of his labours must in a great measure be based.

We perceive him still struggling for a deeper and more satisfactory comprehension of the Christian mystery of the remission of sin,—the very kernel of religious conviction, from which a more complete and spiritual conception of Christianity was to spring forth. On looking back to these beginnings, Luther said: "It is easy talking of remission of sin; indeed, the whole Christian doctrine is easy. Truly, if words would suffice; but if it comes to a struggle in earnest, we perceive our ignorance. For it is a great thing to be able to conceive and believe with heartfelt faith that all my sins are forgiven, and that I am justified before God through such faith. I have experienced often, and experience more and more clearly every day, how beyond all measure difficult this is. . . . . .

Whoever can look upon Christ as his loving Saviour conquers all." He was, indeed, already approaching this point, when at Christmas he joined, with an internal emotion of relief hitherto unknown to him, in the hymn: "O blessed guilt, which hast gained for us such a Redeemer!" (*O beata culpa, quæ talem meruisti Redemptorem.*)

The truth thus arising within him was gradually confirmed by reflection, and comparing certain passages of Scripture, *which formed thenceforth the corner-stone of his religious knowledge.* These were the words of the prophet Habakkuk (ii. 4), "But the just shall live by faith;" and of the Apostle Paul (Rom. i. 17), who calls the Gospel "the power of God unto salvation to them that believe. For therein is the righteousness *which sufficeth before God* revealed from faith to faith." The words, "which sufficeth before God," are Luther's own free translation, warranted by the sense and connexion of the original; the literal translation would be, "the righteousness of God."*

"I had the most intense desire rightly to comprehend St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, but was always stopped by the word 'righteousness.' I was greatly averse to the words, '*the righteousness of God;* for, according to the custom of the schools, I had been taught that I was to understand it in a philosophical sense, as the righteousness according to which God is

* As in the English version.

just and punisheth sinners. Although blameless in conduct, I yet felt myself a great sinner before God; I was also gifted with a tender conscience, and did not presume to reconcile myself to God through my own merits and good works. I felt, therefore, no love for a just and incensed God, but was wroth with him in secret. . . . . Then I reflected day and night upon the true meaning of Paul, and became aware at last that it must be understood thus: '*The justice of God is satisfied by the righteousness revealed in the Gospel, through which, in his mercy and graciousness, he justifies us;* as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' *Thus I soon felt as if born again; as if I had found the gates of Paradise thrown wide open to me.* Now I also looked upon the blessed Scriptures more reverently than in former times, and read them through rapidly. As I had formerly hated the expression, 'the righteousness of God,' I now esteemed it as full of consolation; and this passage of St. Paul's epistle in which it occurs was now in truth the gate of Paradise. Until then I had been wanting only in that I looked upon the Law and the Gospel as one, and deemed there was no difference between Christ and Moses but that of time and degree of perfection; but when I discovered the real difference, then I was free. . . . . Even at the present day I feel horrified when I hear or read the words *justus Deus*, so strongly doth deep-rooted habit cling to me! I laboured industriously

and anxiously to understand the text of Paul (Rom. i. 17), until at length, through the help of the Holy Spirit, I was enabled rightly to weigh the words of the prophet Habakkuk. . . . . From them I came to the conclusion, that *life must arise from faith; that man is just before God through faith. Then the holy Scriptures, nay heaven itself, was opened to my spirit.*"

If at Erfurt the intimacy with Staupitz had been of great importance to Luther's development, its consequences became infinitely more important on his translation to Wittenberg (1508). Staupitz wished to promote his young friend to a post in this new university, in order to present a field for activity to a mind so long dejected and oppressed.

The following nine years (1508–1517), spent at Wittenberg, had this influence upon Luther: they diminished his extravagant monkish labours for the good of his soul, by means of the exertions his duty compelled him to make for the good of others; they also made him more intimately acquainted (a matter of such immense importance) with mankind and the real practice of the world. All this, of necessity, exercised a highly beneficial influence upon his spiritual progress. As philosophical, and afterwards theological, teacher at the university; as preacher to the monastery and in the town church; on his journey to Rome, and in the practical business of his order, which was confided to him by Staupitz for some

time;—in all these diversified relations he learnt with ever-increasing intelligence to judge of the real aspect of his time.

His observations upon his visit to Rome (1510) prove how little he then believed himself called to be the opponent of popery, although much of what he saw and heard revolted his earnest mind, and influenced him at a later period. "It so happened to me at Rome," he writes twenty years later, "when I was one of those foolish saints, that I ran through all churches and crypts, and believed all the fables told about them .... We knew no better. I have celebrated mass some ten times at Rome; and I was actually sorry that my father and mother were still alive, as I might otherwise have released them from purgatory by masses and other costly works. Among other coarse observations, I have heard the courtesans and other lewd people laugh and boast at table as how some said mass, and while blessing the bread and wine said these words: *Panis es, et panis manebis; vinum es, et vinum manebis* (thou art bread, and bread thou wilt remain: thou art wine, and wine thou wilt remain). What could I think of all this? Do they talk thus freely and publicly here at Rome at table, as if pope, cardinals, courtesans, and all, thus said mass together? .... I was quite disgusted with their off-hand manner of celebrating mass, as if they were playing juggling tricks; for before I could get as far

as the gospel in mine, the priest nearest to me had finished his, and called out to me: '*Passa, passa!* Have done; come away!' I wish that every person intended to be a preacher could first go to Rome and see what is done there. I have heard them myself say, 'If there is a hell, Rome is built on the top of it!' No one will credit the roguery carried on, the awful and shameful sin committed in Rome: no one could be persuaded that such villany exists, unless he witnessed and experienced it. The higher their honours and dignities, the more wantonly they sin; so that we have now a new proverb: 'The nearer to Rome, the worse the Christian.'" Luther's great aversion to the dark features in the character of the unhappy degraded Italian nation owes its origin principally to his residence in Italy: "The Italians have cunning, intriguing heads: they must be put to shame, and their degraded state exposed, that they may not despise others, as if *they* were the only wise people; for a hard knot needeth a sharp wedge. For this reason I have always advised that our youths, when they have mastered the Catechism, and are properly grounded in the Word of God, should be sent to Italy to see the wickedness and roguery there, and thus learn to protect themselves therefrom. . . . . The Italians laugh and mock at us because we believe in the Scriptures. They are either very superstitious or epicurean; a small number of them only believe in

the resurrection of the dead; and it is a common saying in Italy, when they mean to go to church: 'Let us go to the *common error* (gemeinen Irrthum)!' They are an intelligent and clever people, aware of the pride of the pope and the ignorance of the monks, who deride all religion as a fable. . . . . When a German has adopted the epicurean philosophy in Italy, and digested this hellish pill, he becomes much worse and more full of malice than an Italian."

In the five years which elapsed between his obtaining the doctor's degree (1512) and his first public attack on the sale of indulgences (1517), he advanced rapidly in his spiritual development as a reformer. The oath taken at the ordination justified his proceedings to his conscience, and proved of great value to him in subsequent temptations. "We must have a certain divine call to a good work," he observes on this subject, "and not our own inclination only. Those who have a sure call from God for the beginning and completing of a good work find it difficult enough. What, then, can those do who proceed without a call, and seek only their own honour and glory?" Thus did *he* express himself, who considered the authority of conscience as the first indispensable condition of all his doings and endeavours; the authority of a conscience, be it observed, which relied solely on the divine call, on the certainty of unison with the divine will.

As a teacher at the university, and as a preacher, he freed himself, with ever-increasing certainty and clearness, from the oppressive shackles of the current philosophy and divinity of the schools; he became more and more alive to the fact, that he must break loose from the traditional forms of philosophy, from those fetters of the soul and the understanding protected by the name of Aristotle. "I said," these are his own words, "that we ought to prove, not merely to suppose; and so I freed myself by degrees from the sophists, and with much prayer proceeded in my studies in my own way." In a letter to his friend Lange at Erfurt (1516), his aversion to the Aristotelian philosophy, and to the whole system of study established in those days, is already expressed in vehement language; he had not only separated from them mentally, but he was eager to meet them in open opposition. The spiritual battle of Reuchlin and Hutten against certain persecuting and insidious individuals among the monks and the adherents of the old school of philosophy, which was raging most furiously just at that moment, could not fail to exercise an encouraging influence upon Luther's mind. He had arrived even then at the decisive conviction which he expressed later (1520) in the fiery words of intense hatred—the conviction that Aristotle and Christ were as far distant one from the other as heaven is from earth; and that Christian truth,

instead of being the serf of the Aristotelian philosophy, ought to be drawn henceforward from its own original sources alone. "I am grieved at heart that that proud heathen should seduce and befool with his false words so many of the worthiest Christians. . . . . That miserable fellow teaches in his best book, *de Anima*, that the soul is mortal with the body; . . . . as if we had not got the holy Scriptures, in which we are taught abundantly those things of which Aristotle had never got the least scent! Yet hath the dead heathen conquered and hindered, nay almost suppressed the books of the living God. . . . . In the same way, the book of Ethics, more than any other book, is directly opposed to God's grace and Christian virtue."

In the pulpit he impressed upon his hearers, as early as 1515, the fundamental idea of his conception of Christian life, *that all our actions are valued by God only according to the motives from which they arise.* This one principle attacked the very centre of monkish morality and views of human life,—the inanimate mechanism of so-called "good works"—*i. e.* piety according to the prescribed measure of penances, castigations, fasting, praying, pilgrimages, &c.—was here condemned and rejected already as the petrifaction of all heartfelt religion and spiritual life, although this sentence of condemnation had not yet been pronounced in plain words as afterwards. Yet was he

bold enough at that time when he preached; for a beginner (in Christian faith and life) much fasting, watching, and praying (asceticism generally) might be necessary, but it became a great hindrance to more advanced believers. "As rain-drops," he says in one of his sermons, "fall upon the land, so falls the word upon the hearts of men, so hath Christ descended on the nations through his word; and as the rain falls independent of the work of our hands, so descends the mercy of Christ independent of our merits. . . . . The Lord will be our hen* of salvation, but we will not have him. For this is what I meant to say, *that we cannot be saved through our own righteousness*, but we must fly under the wings of this our hen, that we may receive from her fulness what is wanting in us. But those who walk securely become the prey of the vultures; they will not hear the voice of the hen, which crieth out to them that their own righteousness is sin."

In the above we have witnessed the quiet gradual progress which was made, often in the darkest depths of the human mind, towards that which we have previously called *The Reformation in Luther*. *One step*—a most difficult one—remained to the Reformation *through* Luther.

Whoever enters the monastic cells of Erfurt and Wittenberg which were occupied by Luther, may say

* Matthew xxiii. 37, "Even as a hen gathereth her chickens."

to himself, without exaggeration, "In that confined space one of the greatest and most influential struggles was experienced ever recorded in the history of the world; *the transition of the Christian conscience from the middle ages to modern times; the breaking forth of heartfelt from mere external religion; the deliverance of free spiritual and personal Christianity from the preparatory wrappings of forms and ordinances.*"

SECOND SKETCH.

STRUGGLE WITH ROME.

We have accompanied Luther to the threshold of his career as a reformer; we have sought to trace those mighty thoughts and deeds which were hereafter to shake the world, to their secret origin in the mind of the almost unknown monk and professor. He now appears upon a wider stage, amidst events of world-wide interest, whose profound signification we must endeavour to apprehend, if we would bring the image of the reformer impressively and vividly before our mind's eye. Among these great historical events, his struggle against Rome stands in the foreground; it gave European importance to the German doctor;

and even now numberless persons connect no other idea with the name of Luther than that of a victorious opponent to popery.

I. The Struggle.

After the severe internal and external preparations, the history of which we have traced in the preceding pages, the most severe and important crisis of his development yet awaited Luther; the persevering resistance which the world, more especially in the form of the degraded papacy, opposed to him. He was now to become conscious of all the deductions to be drawn from the point of view he had attained in spiritual sense; he must now learn to build solely upon the truth thus recognised, upon religious principle so painfully acquired, instead of leaning on ecclesiastical authority in his slow but ever-increasing attempts at amendment.

The struggle commenced with the point which had been the decisive saving one in Luther's spiritual life. While in the hands of an avaricious, worldly, and domineering priesthood and superstitious people, it had degenerated into a revolting scandal to the cause of religion. The point in question was nothing less than—how man might find the way to return from error and defilement to God, and obtain reconciliation with his Creator and Judge. It was, in fact, the

craving of conscience for the remission of sins, for redemption and atonement,—a longing for the effectual cure of the deepest ills of humanity, that gave to Luther's appearance before the world its great and abiding importance; an importance we must not suffer the scholastic form and language in which the debate was for a long time carried on, to obscure.

The answer Luther had found to the above all-important question was of a deeply spiritual and purely religious nature: The repentant return of the heart to God; unconditional humble confidence in free grace, in the love and mercy of God made man. The answer which, on the other hand, the church of Rome gave *practically* to this question was: For money you may purchase your peace with God; in purchasing the letters of indulgence which the highest ecclesiastical authority, the pope himself, offers for sale from the treasury of his mercy, you can obtain forgiveness of sin. Such was the traffic in indulgences: a rich source of revenue for Rome. *It thus was understood by the people and extolled by the clerical dealers;* notwithstanding the zealous and learned attempts made by papists of later periods, to prove that *the church* never understood indulgences in this coarse sense. *The fact* remains uncontradicted,—that in the bosom of that church, *forgiveness of sins was openly offered for sale* in the name of her highest dignitary, and was actually sold in the form of letters of indulgence.

The estimate we form of the separation of the churches in the sixteenth century, as well as all attempts at understanding between earnest sincere Catholics and Protestants, must have its foundation in this astounding fact. It is no rhetorical exaggeration, but a literal fact, that in the original quarrel between Luther and Tetzel, the seller of indulgences, we have before us, as it were, in striking contrast, Christ and Belial, God and Mammon.

The first act of Luther and of the Reformation was, therefore, *the raising of Christianity from its deep degeneration; a troubled cry of the Christian conscience against the most revolting disfigurement and perversion of the religion of the Crucified:* this is the imperishable glory of the 31st of October 1517,—the day on which Luther affixed his ninety-five theses, against the use of indulgences, on the church-doors at Wittenberg.

The very first thesis opposes a radically different view, drawn from moral and religious considerations, to the whole theory of penitence and absolution, as then maintained by the degenerate Christian religion of the priests: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ saith, 'Repent ye, &c., he wills that *the whole life of his faithful people on earth* shall be a continuous penitence. . . . . And such word," the second thesis adds, "neither can nor must be understood to refer to the sacrament of penance, that is to say, of con-

fession and absolution as administered by the priest." The thirty-second thesis declares still more boldly, "those persons who believe themselves sure of salvation through indulgences will go to the devil with their teachers." The assertion of the thirty-sixth thesis, that "every Christian who feels true repentance and sorrow for sins has entire forgiveness, without letters of indulgence," was already essentially a rejection of the whole hierarchical edifice. In the thirty-seventh it is said, "every true Christian, living or dead, partakes in all the blessings of Christ and of the church *as the gift of God*, without any indulgences." In the forty-third and forty-fourth also: "Christians must be taught that it is better to give to the poor, or lend to those in want, than to purchase indulgences: for by works of love, love increaseth, and man becometh more holy; but by indulgences he does not get better, but only more confident and free from suffering and punishment. . . . . Christians ought to be taught," he says further, "that the pope's indulgence is well enough so long as it is not relied on (49. . . . Trust in indulgences for salvation is false and worthless, *even though the commissary, nay the pope himself, should pledge his own soul on it* (52). . . . . The treasures of the church, out of which the pope grants indulgences, are neither sufficiently defined nor well enough known to the community of Christ (56). . . . . *The true real treasure of the church* is the *holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God* (62)."

In this way the warfare began, the course of which, with all its details, has been already so often related, that we may confine ourselves to pointing out those which refer to the most prominent and important changes.

However bold and impressive the language of these theses, Luther himself had no idea at that time of the flame he would kindle by their means: his spirit, still painfully wavering between the authority of the Scriptures and of the church, would perhaps have trembled and drawn back, could he then have foreseen all the consequences of this first step. His mind for several years longer continued to struggle between freedom of judgment and humility: zeal for the faith and piety, conscience and increased knowledge, urged on a rupture; reverence and the obedience in which he had been brought up inclined him to peace with Rome.

He himself characterises his mental history during the first years of the struggle in words most worthy of consideration: "I had got singly and through imprudence into this dispute; and as I could not draw back, I not only gave way to the pope in many important articles, but willingly and very honestly reverenced him. For who was I, a miserable, despised monk, then more resembling a corpse than a living man, that I should oppose myself to the majesty of the pope? Those self-confident spirits, who after-

wards attacked the pope with great pride and presumption, know but little of the sufferings and inflictions which my heart experienced during the first and second year; and of the not pretended or imaginary, but real humility in which I then lived. I, who stuck fast in the road, was not so cheerful or so confident of my case; for then I was ignorant of many things which now I know, thank God! I only carried on the dispute, and was eager to be taught; but as I could not derive sufficient instruction from the works of the dead nor from the dull teachers, that is to say, from the writings of the theologians and jurists, I sought for advice from the living, and to hear the church of God itself. There I found indeed many pious men much pleased with my propositions; but at that time I deemed it impossible to recognise and acknowledge *them* as members of the church imbued with the Holy Ghost, and looked solely to the pope, cardinals, bishops, theologians, jurists, monks, and priests. From them I looked for the Holy Ghost; for I had so eagerly adopted their doctrine, that it stupified me, and I knew not whether I was awake or asleep. Only when, by the help of the Scriptures, I had got over all the arguments which opposed me, I did at length, by the grace of God, and with much anxiety, trouble, and labour, overcome the last,—namely, *that we ought to hear the church*. For I believed the pope's church to be the true church much more seriously and

reverently than those shameful perverters who praise the pope's church so highly, in opposition to my views."

The above observations furnish a key to many expressions of entire subjection which he was still able to make use of while addressing the pope. When he forwarded to Leo X., through Staupitz, the treatise for the establishment and further extension of his theses (*resolutiones* or *probationes*), he addressed him at the conclusion of his letter in terms which astonish us, as coming from one who subsequently declared the pope to be Antichrist: "Therefore, most holy father, I throw myself at the feet of your holiness, and resign myself to you, with all that I am and possess. Let your holiness deal with me according to your pleasure. It rests with your holiness to agree or to differ from my statement; to declare me to be either right or wrong; to grant me life or to take it away. Let the consequence be what it may, I will acknowledge that the voice of your holiness is the voice of Christ, who acteth and speaketh through it. If I have merited death, I shall not refuse to die; for the earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it: praise be to him for ever and ever!"

The arrogant and vehement literary conflict begun against him by Sylvester Prierias, a Dominican of Rome, Dr. John Eck at Ingoldstadt, and Jacob Hoogstraaten at Cologne, notorious as the judge of heretics, with their scholastic weapons, was only the prelude

to more serious proceedings. He was cited to Rome to defend himself; but obtained, through princely interest, the favour of a hearing in Germany. He believed that before Cardinal Cajetan de Vio, the pope's legate in Germany, he might appeal successfully, not only to the holy Scriptures and to common sense, but also to the fathers and to decrees, to prove the justice of his theses. He firmly declined to recant; and saved himself from violence, and perhaps assassination, only by a sudden and secret departure (Oct. 20, 1518).

It was uncertain, some time after his return, whether he would be allowed to remain at Wittenberg, or be compelled to eat the bread of sorrow as a homeless wanderer, to languish in prison, or die upon the scaffold. These were the days of his spiritual heroism; the grandest in history, if we estimate grandeur by sublimity of character. Even before the examination at Augsburg, he was resigned to all that might befall him: "If they execute my poor body," he wrote to Staupitz, "by violence or treachery, they deprive me only of a few hours. I have satisfaction for all this in my sweet Redeemer and Mediator, whom I will praise as long as I live." After his hearing, he thought of going to Paris, if his elector could or would not protect him: "I daily expect the anathema from Rome; therefore I put every thing in readiness, that I may be guided and prepared to go,

LUTHER BEFORE THE POPE'S LEGATE.

with Abraham, I know not whither; but I go in perfect security, because God is every where."

He saw that he had entered on a career where standing still was impossible, and where he had no choice left but cowardly to recede, contrary to the dictates of his conscience, or advance boldly against Rome. "If I remain here," he wrote on the 2nd of December 1518 (at Wittenberg), "I shall be deprived of liberty of speech and writing; but if I leave, I may resign all, and sacrifice my life to Christ." He wrote his appeal to a council to be convened hereafter, and received permission from the Elector Frederick to remain at Wittenberg. The movement once begun, it continued to ferment mightily in his mind: "My pen is pregnant with greater matters; I know not myself whence these thoughts arise in me; it is my opinion, that this matter is not as yet properly begun."

Soon afterwards a skilful attempt was made from the other side to touch those chords in Luther's mind which might attune him to subjection to ecclesiastical authority. His piety and reverence, innate and acquired, for the existing authorities of the church of Rome, for tradition and history; his dread of the impending schism, and the awful responsibility it involved,—made him easily accessible to the remonstrances of a dexterous papal envoy, Charles Miltitz the Saxon (Jan. 1519). The cunning policy of the

nuncio, already intimidated and disposed to mild measures by the expression of public opinion in Germany against Rome, nearly succeeded in swaying the obnoxious doctor of Altenburg. It went so far, that Luther declared himself willing to admonish every one to obedience to the church of Rome; and at the same time to confess that he had declared the truth with too much warmth, and perhaps at the wrong time; he also promised to write humbly to the pope, and to be thenceforth entirely silent upon the points that had been debated, provided his opponents observed silence likewise. "I bear witness," he wrote to Leo X., March 3rd, 1519, "before God and his creatures, that I never intended, nor do this day intend,—that I never seriously proposed to attack the power of the church of Rome and of your holiness in any way, or to detract from it by craftiness. Yes, I freely bear witness that the power of this church stands above all; and that nothing in heaven or on earth should be preferred before her, save Jesus Christ, Lord over all."

In the pamphlet intended for the instruction and pacification of the people, "Dr. Martin Luther's Exposition of several Articles which have been pointed out and ascribed to him by his unfriends," he cautions his readers in the most decisive terms against separation from Rome: "Although things in Rome might well be better, still neither this nor any other reason

is great enough to cause us to tear ourselves away or separate from the church. Indeed, the worse it is, the more we ought to run and cling to it; for schism and contempt will not mend it. . . . Nor ought we to forsake God for the sake of the devil."

Thus it appeared as if the religious and spiritual movement which, at a later period, became the very soul of modern history, was to exhaust itself at its source; or, as Luther himself says, "bleed to death." Or may we conclude that even without Luther, or in despite of him, the movement, once begun, would have continued and reached its object? To such questions we have no other answers than suppositions according to analogies; the more important fact for us is, *that Luther was not silent*, as he had first intended.

Dr. Eck gave occasion for the fresh outbreak by the publication of theses which he meant to defend at Leipzic against Luther's colleague Karlstadt. Luther saw himself attacked in them; and set up against Eck's assertion of the permanent supremacy of the church of Rome the counter thesis, that this supremacy was founded only upon papal decrees issued during the last four hundred years, in contradiction to the accredited history of eleven hundred years, and against the text of the Word of God, and against the Council of Nice. In the midst of the historical and exegetical studies with which he prepared himself

for the disputations at Leipzic (27th of June to 13th of July, 1519), it appeared as if the Scriptures and history left him only the doubt as to "whether the pope was Antichrist himself, or only his apostle?" This was said in confidence to Spalatin; in his writings at that time he still expressed himself with much greater prudence; for instance, in his epistle to the Galatians: "I give the highest honour to the Roman bishop and his decrees, above which there is none other; and I except no one but the sovereign of this vicegerent, Jesus Christ, his Lord and the Lord of us all." But when he declares here, that he would examine the word and the work of the vicegerent *by the word of Christ*, he places himself, in fact, already above papal authority, by asserting the right of appeal to a higher spiritual authority. Thus he had already taken the position of Evangelical Protestantism, before the name of Protestant was known. The confidence of his soul at this time is breathed forth in the words to Spalatin: "The truth will be maintained by its own right hand, not by mine, nor thine, nor any man's hand."

The most important result of the Leipzic disputations was, that Luther maintained against Eck the idea of "Jesus Christ only being the head of the church militant, and that the pope held the primacy only by human and not by divine right." And when he did not shrink from the conclusion, "that some of

the articles of Huss and the Bohemians were Christian and evangelical," he stepped beyond the boundaries of the authority of the councils. His new evangelical view of the importance of the laity, so called, was made clear in the demand that at the Universities of Paris and Erfurt, appointed to arbitrate in the disputations at Leipzic, all the faculties, and not the faculty of divinity alone, should have votes. Although he behaved so boldly at Leipzic, he yet felt afterwards astonished that he could have ascribed so much authority to the pope: "Now see and learn, Christian reader, by my case, how difficult it is to cast off and get free from such errors as the whole world confirms by its example, and which by long habit have become second nature."

An eye-witness of the disputations at Leipzic, Petrus Mosellanus, gives the following description of Luther as he appeared at that time: "Martin is of middle height, and so much worn with care and study, that one might count all his bones, if one saw him near. His voice is clear and piercing, his learning and knowledge of the Scriptures admirable; when speaking, he is never at a loss for matter or expression. Civil and kindly, neither gloomy nor proud in company, he is always self-possessed, and shows a cheerful face whatever his enemies may plot against him. They approach him generally with one thing only, that in rebuking others he is more inconsiderate

and severe than becomes a theological reformer, or indeed any theologian."

After the disputations at Leipzic, Luther once more exchanged the two-edged sword of oral preaching for the pen, in polemical writings against the Franciscans, against Emser. Even thus early the Bohemians addressed to him the encouraging words: "What Huss once was for Bohemia, that art thou, Martin Luther, for Saxony."

Luther's position became again as uncertain and insecure (from the autumn of 1519 until the summer of 1520) as in the winter of 1518, after the examination at Augsburg. On the 14th of January, 1520, he wrote: "I have given up and resigned myself to the Lord. His will be done! Who has asked him to make a doctor of me? But having made me one, let him protect me, or destroy me, if he repent him of it. This temptation does not frighten me at all." To the warnings of his friend Spalatin, who became alarmed at the increasing number of his enemies at the electoral court, he replied: "There is no fear that thou shouldst become too clever, any more than that I should become too silly. If thou think justly of the Gospel, thou canst not expect that this should end without offence, noise, and revolt. Thou canst not change the sword into a feather, or war into peace. God's word itself is sword, war, overthrow, offence. God carries me away with him; let him see what he

can make of me: for I have the certain conviction that in all this I have sought and prayed for nothing of my own impulse,—it hath been wrung from me by the wrath of others. Be of good courage, and heed not what is visible; faith is the foundation of what we do not see. . . . . I seek nothing. Whether I stand or fall, I lose nothing, and I gain nothing."

No one could speak thus, who had not thrown himself with his whole soul into a great and holy cause, and identified himself with all its cares and hopes. Such words of Christian heroism as the above belong to the most sublime part of Luther's life; they outweigh, if justly and truly recorded, and regarded with sympathy for what is holy in man's nature, all his faults and imperfections. When he saw his writings condemned by the universities of Cologne and Louvaine, his enemies at court increase in number and virulence, nay even his life threatened by assassins, he prepared for expatriation; many times he was ready to retreat to Bohemia for concealment. "I am ever willing to be silent," he writes, July 9th 1520, "*if they will not attempt to silence the truth of the Gospel.* They may obtain any thing from me, nay I will give all of my own free will, *so they leave the way of salvation free to Christians.* . . . . . I want no cardinal's hat, nor gold; nothing of all that they hold dearest at Rome. But if I cannot obtain this, they may take from me my office, and let me live and die solitary in a corner."

The encouraging address of the Franconian knights, Ulrich von Hutten and Sylvester von Schauenburg, fell upon him like lightning in the very midst of his uncertainty. Already, in the beginning of the year 1520, Hutten had secretly, through Melanchthon, offered the protection of Francis von Sickingen; he now wrote (June 4): "It is said that ye are outlawed and excommunicated. Oh, how blessed are you, Luther! what a happy man are you! for of you all God-fearing hearts will say and sing, 'They take arms against the soul of the righteous, and condemn innocent blood; but the Lord will repay them for their unrighteousness.' What a misfortune and affliction would it bring upon all Christianity, if you were now to fall away!" In the letter from Sylvester von Schauenburg (June 11th), he was entreated not to fly into Bohemia, if the elector should withdraw his protection; "for I, and, as I think, an hundred of the nobility, whom, please God, I mean to raise, will stand faithfully by you, and will protect you against all danger from your enemies, as long as your opinions are unrefuted by a general Christian assembly, or by trustworthy and sensible judges, or you be better instructed."

These letters had an influence upon Luther not easily to be mistaken, freeing him gradually from all considerations for the elector and the university: "The die is cast; the favour or wrath of the Romish

party is despised. I will never be reconciled to them, nor have any thing in common with them. Let them condemn and burn my books! I, in return, will condemn and publicly burn the whole papal law, this many-headed dragon of heresies: and there shall be an end to that humiliation which I have hitherto endured and exhibited in vain."

In the summer and autumn of the same year (1520), three addresses were written, containing the signal for the Reformation in its first freshness, entitled: "To the Christian nobility of the German Nation;" "Of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church;" "On the Liberty of the Christian." Whoever wishes to become acquainted with the guiding and impelling principle of the spiritual struggle in Germany against Rome in its original form, must refer again and again to these most important documents, which prove the yet unsubdued demand for reformation.

One day, Luther, while travelling with Lorenz Suess, exclaimed while he rose from prayer: "Now I have charged my gun; if it go off well, it must take effect. I will write an address to the German nobility; if that succeed, and they hear the word of God, you shall see what will come of it!" The little treatise, the design of which was then first conceived in his mind, was no other than his "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning

the Amendment of the Christian Estate" (July). This was a step of incalculable importance; for by it he called upon the laity (deemed unworthy in the Romish view) for assistance against the hierarchical system, that he might bring about the necessary reformation in the affairs of the church, notwithstanding the opposition of Rome and its priests, by means of public opinion and the powerful co-operation of the people. "The time for silence is past," he says, in his dedication to Nicholaus von Amsdorf, "and the time for speaking has come." He meant to try "whether God would help his church by means of the laity; since the clergy, to whom the task more properly belonged, had become wholly indifferent."

In the introduction he addresses himself to the emperor and the nobility, warning them not to begin by trusting in their own power and understanding. Former emperors had, perhaps, been overcome in their struggles against the popes, for the very reason that they had relied upon their own power rather than on God; because (we may say) they defended a political principle rather than a religious one. "We must here, despairing of earthly power, attack the enemy with humble trust in God. . . . . and keep before our eyes only the distressed condition of Christianity. Without this, the beginning might be promising; but as we proceed, the evil principle will create such a confusion, that the whole world may

swim in blood, and yet no good ensue." Here we have, on the threshold of the revolution, the sober wisdom of the true reformer, who does not seek to enforce by violence a spiritual principle; he does not seek to attain a pure object by impure means, by enlisting vulgar and selfish impulses in its cause.

His view of the Romish system, and his attack on it, were based on three leading ideas: "The Romanists have thrown up three bulwarks, behind which they have hitherto intrenched themselves so well, that no one hath been able to reform them.

"1. That temporal power has no right over them; that spiritual is superior to temporal power.

"2. No one but the pope may interpret the Scriptures.

"3. No one but the pope can convene a council."

While attacking this triple spiritual bulwark of popery, he is deeply impressed with the fact, that he is entering on one of the most memorable spiritual battles in the history of the world: "Now, God help us, and give us one of those trumpets by which the walls of Jericho were overthrown, that we may also overthrow with a blast those walls of straw or paper, and set free the rod of Christian truth for the punishment of sinners, and expose to the light of day the cunning and deceit of the devil!" The most powerful spiritual influences were brought to bear upon these three bulwarks; to principles he opposed principles, to

ancient worn-out conceptions he opposed new ones, whose freshness was hailed with sympathy by the nation. When Rome appealed to the sovereignty of the church over the state, Luther addressed the patriotic spirit of the peoples, the now-matured consciousness of political dignity and independence, and the spiritual and religious importance of the Christian state. When Rome claimed for the pope the exclusive right to interpret the Scriptures, Luther rejected all submission of the original Christian religion to human arbitration, and insisted on the right to individual religious opinion and liberty. And when the pope, in the third of the above propositions, reserved to himself the prerogative of convening a council, Luther regarded this as a mere tyrannical attempt to deprive the church of some of its original and inalienable rights.

While attacking that "first bulwark of Romanism," he rises to the sublime idea of evangelical Protestantism, so rich in consequences, to the recognition of *the common priesthood of Christians;* the idea which contains in itself an inexhaustible supply of the reformatory elements for all future ages, and either renders the relapse of Christianity into hierarchical apathy impossible, or at least always assures it the victory again. "*All Christians are truly of priestly rank, and admit of no distinction, unless arising from office.* . . . . For baptism, the gospel, and faith only,

make Christians and priests. The pope's anointing, the tonsure, ordaining and consecrating, may make hypocrites and noodles, but never can make a man a Christian or spiritual. For by baptism we are all consecrated priests." With this idea the emancipation of coming times was pronounced; the torch was lighted which was to guide a new period, and which, in its turn, has preserved the blessed right to freedom of conscience. Every subsequent effort for free spiritual progress and vital religion has emanated from this conviction; and the great day at Worms was, in fact, only the public assertion of this grand principle.

When Luther asserted what follows, it was his object to destroy at the very root all false priestly pretensions: "If there were no higher consecration in us than that which pope or bishop confers, priests would never be made by the consecration of pope or bishops; and to speak still more clearly, if a small body of pious Christian laity placed in a wilderness, without a priest consecrated by a bishop, were to agree among themselves and appoint one, whether married or not, to baptize, read masses, absolve, and preach, he would be as truly a priest as if the pope and all the bishops had consecrated him. Therefore, a priesthood among Christians must be only official: because he holds office, he has precedence; as soon as he is deposed, he is a peasant or a citizen like others."

The idea of a common priesthood necessarily leads to a higher spiritual conception of the state and all moral actions and endeavours; the state, as well as the general moral development of human nature, was looked upon and esteemed as an element of Christianity, as an essential portion of the kingdom of heaven: "We all are one body, of which Jesus Christ is the head; every one is a member of the other. *Christ has not two bodies, or two sorts of bodies, one temporal and the other spiritual. He is one head, and has one body.* . . . . Therefore should the temporal Christian power exercise its office freely and unhindered, not heeding whether the individual it attacks be pope, bishop, or priest. What the ecclesiastical law hath said against this, is the pure invention of Romish presumption. Temporal (political) power has become part or a member of the Christian body; and although its functions be temporal, yet is its nature spiritual."

The second bulwark of the church of Rome, "that she had alone had the right to interpret the Scriptures," Luther overthrows by those unequivocal declarations of Holy Writ which emphatically represent the individual spirit of Christianity, the right to freedom of conscience: "'Every Christian is taught of God.' 'He that is spiritual judges all things.' 'We have all one spirit of faith.' These and many other texts should make us courageous and free, and prevent our

suffering the spirit of liberty, as St. Paul calls it, to be frightened away by the inventions of the popes; but lead us freely to judge all they do or cause to be done, by our believing knowledge of the Scriptures; and force them also to be quieted, not by their own understanding, but by a better. . . . . If God spoke to a prophet by the mouth of an ass, why should he not speak now to a pope by the mouth of a pious man? . . . . Therefore it behoves every Christian to stand by the faith."

The third Romish bulwark, "that the pope alone is empowered to call a council, or confirm its decrees," must fall of itself, after the overthrow of the other two: "For if the pope act contrary to the Scriptures, we are bound to stand by the Scriptures, and to correct him according to the word of Christ (Matt. xviii. 15–17). If I am to complain of him before the community, I must first call it together. . . . . Therefore, if necessity command, and the pope give offence to Christendom, he that is most capable, as a faithful member of the whole body, shall take steps for the convening of a truly free council. *Nothing can effect this so well as the temporal sword:* particularly as the laity are now Christians and priests equally with us; spiritual and powerful in all things like ourselves; and are to discharge their office and their work, which God hath appointed, freely towards every one. . . . . *There is no power in the church except for amendment:*

if the pope, therefore, seeks to use his power of interference with a free council, to prevent such amendment of the church, we must not regard him or his power; and should he thunder out excommunications and curses, we must despise it, *as the proceeding of a madman, and excommunicate him in his turn, in full reliance upon God.*

"In this way, I hope, the false and lying threats with which the church of Rome has for a long time intimidated us, will be repelled, and it, like ourselves, be subject to temporal authority; and be no longer suffered to interpret the Scriptures without skill, and so as to do violence to their true meaning; nor have power to prevent the calling together of councils. And if she do so, she is truly of the community of Antichrist and of the devil, having nothing of Christ but the name."

His practical propositions in this treatise tend principally to the confiscation of all the papal revenues, and depriving the pope of all jurisdiction over the emperor. In connexion with these two points he also insists upon the limitation of monastic orders, the abolition of celibacy among the clergy, and the reform of the system of indulgences and of universities and schools.

A few months afterwards (in the beginning of October) appeared "The little book of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," in which he attacked

another main pillar of the Roman Catholicism of the middle ages,—the doctrine of the seven sacraments. He states energetically and positively, in the very outset of this work, that it was the real necessity of the case, and the insufficiency of the opposing arguments, which led him by one discovery after another, further and further from Rome: "Whether I will or no, I am made more learned day by day." The whole outward form of the church as then existing, more particularly the idea of a separate and exclusively privileged priesthood, rested upon the Catholic doctrine of the sacraments: to attack that doctrine was, therefore, tantamount to questioning the entire form of Catholicism; and Luther did not conceal from himself the vast range of this undertaking: "I presume to meddle with a weighty matter, which it may not perhaps be possible to overthrow; because, having been confirmed by long usage, and received by common assent, it is so completely interwoven with all, that the greater number of the books now accredited, *nay the whole form of the church, must be put aside and changed, and an entirely different code of ceremonies be introduced or re-established.* But my Saviour liveth: and we must give greater heed to the word of God than to the thoughts of men and angels." He recognised only the three sacraments common to all Christians—baptism, communion, and penance—as founded on the word of Christ, and therefore

binding and necessary; — another progressive step towards the self-liberation of the church from the "Babylonian captivity" of priestly dominion and of the levitical Romish ordinances; a victorious step towards the liberation of spiritual Christianity from the perishable and oppressive form with which it had been gradually invested.

Shortly afterwards (in the middle of October), the third of these impressive writings, in which Luther's warfare with Rome was carried on, made its appearance—the discourse "On the Liberty of the Christian." He explains a Christian liberty as dominion *over* and servitude *under* all things: dominion, because through faith we receive communion with the Lord of all things; and servitude, because love impels us to serve all our brethren. According to his divine nature (that is Luther's idea), man is above all wants, except God and his word; the certainty of an eternal worth and a blessed existence alone constitute his true nourishment. According to his material nature, on the contrary, he is allied to the dust, of which he can free himself only through love and communion. All material possession is given us only to assist our neighbour with it in true love, "because every one has sufficient for himself in his faith." This is the language of a most noble religious idealism: only he who knows and loves the spiritual and eternal good is raised above temporal good, and has power to look

upon and treat all earthly things merely as the means and instruments of love. "Nothing external can make the spiritual man free or pious; none of these things reach the soul, either to make it free or to enslave it, to make it good or bad. . . . . We must thus be convinced that the soul may dispense with all things, except the word of God; and without the word of God, no other thing is of use. . . . And Christ has come for no other end but to preach the word of God. Also the apostles, bishops, priests, and all the clergy have been called and instituted solely for the sake of the word,—although now, alas! things are different. But if thou askest, 'Which is the word that giveth such exceeding mercy, and how shall I use it?'—answer: It is nothing else but the teaching of Christ which is contained in the Gospel; which is expressed and carried out in such a way, that thou hearest, as it were, thy God speak to thee, saying that all thy life and thy works are as nothing before him, but that thou must eternally perish with all that is in thee. The which, if thou truly believest, will make thee doubt thyself. . . . . But that thou mayest be rid of all that is of thee and in thee, — that is to say, thy corruption, — God setteth before thee his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and tells thee through his living and consoling word, thou shalt resign thyself to him with steadfast faith, and sincerely trust in him. Then, for the sake of that faith, shall all thy sins be

forgiven thee, all thy corruption conquered; thou shalt be just, true, pious, free from all things; and all commandments shall be fulfilled. . . . . In faith, thou possessest all things; without faith, thou hast none. . . . *Such as the word is, such the spirit becometh through it; even as iron becometh fiery red like fire through contact with it.* . . . That is Christian liberty,—the only faith which doth not cause us to live idly or do evil, but simply teaches we need no works to obtain holiness and salvation. . . . . Not only doth faith give so much, that it makes the soul like the divine word; *but it also unites the soul with Christ*, as a bride with her bridegroom: from which union it results that Christ and the soul become one, and that the possessions of both, in despite of the fall (*Fall oder Unfall*), become common between them: that which Christ possesses becometh the property of the believing soul; what the soul hath is Christ's. So all the possessions and blessedness of Christ are the soul's. So Christ takes upon himself all the sins and vices of the soul. Hence springs the blessed antagonism that Christ is God and man. . . . . As he taketh upon himself the sins of the believing soul through the wedding-ring, that is to say, through faith; so must all sins be drowned and absorbed in him. . . . . For his triumphant righteousness is too strong for all sins. . . . . Therefore is faith only the righteousness of man, and the keeping all the commandments; for whoever

fulfilleth the first principal commandment — 'Thou shalt honour thy God'—keeps assuredly and easily all other commandments. . . . . *This is nothing else but the piety of the heart; this is the head and the whole being of holiness.* . . . . Now from all this it follows, that a Christian lives not for himself only, but in Christ and in his neighbour; in Christ through faith, in his neighbour through love. Through faith he rises above himself in God; from God he descends again below himself through love, and yet remains ever in God and divine love. Behold, this is true Christian liberty!—which surpasses all other liberty as much as heaven surpasses earth."

The above passages regarding faith and the word it was necessary to give at length, in order to obtain a clear perception of what is characteristic and decided in Luther's peculiar views. These peculiar views in the spirit of the Apostle Paul and of the Father Augustin were for him the imperfect utterance of the (to us all) inexpressible and inconceivable mystery of divine grace. We repeat, this was his manner of expressing himself, which we may confidently adapt to our own wants and experiences, if our comprehension of the Scriptures, of our own heart, and of the ways of God in history, lead us to explain to ourselves the mystery of divine love and mercy in other combinations and in other images and comparisons. The essential point which Luther strove in his

language to make most emphatic, was ever only the consoling idea of free unmerited grace, which extends salvation and blessedness to him who resigns himself in penitence and faith; it was therefore, above all things, that view of Christianity which gives rest and peace to an awakened conscience, and seeks all that is most holy in religion in the inmost experience of the heart.

II. The Rupture.

While Luther was writing these three important treatises, the bull against him had already been issued at Rome, but without his knowledge. Before he saw it, he had been prevailed upon by Miltitz to make one more attempt at conciliation. In October 1520, after Dr. Eck had begun publishing the papal bull in Saxony, Luther once again wrote to Leo X., to whom he had dedicated (under date Sept. 6, antedating five weeks, that he might ignore the bull) his treatise "On the Liberty of a Christian." "I bring with me a little book," he says in his letter, "as a token of good will and beginning of peace, by which your holiness will perceive how I would wish to proceed, if your unchristian flatterers would allow me. It is a very little book, and yet is the whole sum of a Christian life contained in it, if the true sense be understood."

LUTHER BURNS THE PAPAL BULL

In this remarkable letter Luther draws a clear distinction between the pope as an individual and the papal chair or cure. "Indeed, your reputation and the fame of your life are so renowned all over the world, through the reports of many most learned men, that no one would venture to attack you. . . . . Therefore I pray, holy father Leo, that thou wouldst accept my apology, and look upon me as one who never intended thee any harm, and wishes thee all that is good. . . . . In all things I would willingly give way to others; but the word of God I can and will not forsake or deny. . . . . But it is true I have boldly attacked the Roman see, which is called the court of Rome; of which thou thyself must acknowledge that it is worse and more infamous than ever a Sodom and Gomorrah or Babylon was. And, as far as I can observe, its corruption is not to be cured or amended; every thing about it hath become desperate and beyond conception. Therefore I felt vexed that they should deceive and injure poor people every where in thy name, and under the cloak of the church of Rome. This I have opposed, and will continue to oppose as long as a Christian spirit lives within me. . . . For it is not concealed from thee thyself, how for many past years nothing but corruption of soul, body, and property, and the most injurious examples of evil-doing, have gone out into the world from Rome; through which the church of Rome, which in

former times was most holy, has now become a pit of destruction beyond all pits of destruction, a den of thieves beyond all dens of thieves, the head and front of sin, death, and damnation; so that one could scarcely conceive any increase of wickedness, even if Antichrist himself were to come.

"In the meantime thou, holy father Leo, sittest like a sheep among the wolves, like Daniel in the lions' den, like Ezekiel among the scorpions. What canst thou do alone among so many savage monstrosities (*wilder Wunder*)? And if three or four learned and pious cardinals were to stand by thee, how little is that among such swarms! Ye would be destroyed by poison, ere ye could begin to amend the matter. There is an end of the Roman see. . . . The wrath of God hath fallen upon it unceasingly. . . . That is the cause why I have ever been sorry that thou hast at this time become pope, thou pious Leo, who mightest have been worthy of this office in better times. The papal chair is not worthy of thee now; rather should the spirit of evil be pope, which indeed ruleth more than thou dost in Babylon. If St. Bernard laments over his Pope Eugenius, when the papal chair still ruled with good hopes of amendment, how much more should we lament over thee, because in the last three hundred years corruption and folly have irremediably gained ground! Is it not true that there is nothing worse under the wide heavens,

nothing more pestilential or odious, than the court of Rome?

"See, then, my lord and father, the reason why I have so roughly handled this pestilential chair; indeed, I have been in hopes that I should merit thy grace and thanks for attacking thy prison, nay thy hell, so vigorously and boldly. . . . . It would never have entered my heart to act angrily against the court of Rome; for seeing that it could not be amended, I have despised it; have therefore given myself up to the quiet, peaceful study of the Scriptures, that I might become useful to those among whom I dwell. As in this I did not prove unsuccessful, the spirit of evil opened his eyes and became aware of it; he quickly, in foolish ambition, roused up the distinguished enemy of Christ and of truth, in his servant John Eck, and inspired him that he should draw me unawares into a disputation, and ensnare me in some expression which might accidentally escape me against the papacy."

After having explained how he had been drawn more and more deeply into the opposition to Romish abuses by Eck and Cardinal Cajetan,—although he would much rather have pursued "quieter and more useful studies,"—he once more, according to the propositions of Miltitz, attempts a compromise with the pope: "Therefore I now approach, holy father Leo, and at thy feet I pray that thou wilt, if possible,

bridle thy flatterers, who are the enemies of peace, and yet cry out for peace. *Recant my doctrine I never will;* nor let any one attempt to make me, unless he wish to throw the matter into still greater confusion. *Nor will I endure rule or limit in the interpretation of Scripture;* because the word of God, which teaches true liberty, neither shall nor ought to be constrained. *If these two points* be granted me, there can be nothing else proposed which I will not do and suffer with all my heart. *I am an enemy to strife; I do not wish to excite or stir up any one;* but if I be stirred up, I shall not be silent either with tongue or pen. *Your holiness may, with a few easy short words, put an end to all these vehement disputes, and command silence and peace.*

"Then do not listen to those who sing sweetly in thine ear; who say that thou art not a mere man, but blended with God. . . . Thou art a servant of all the servants of God, and in a more dangerous position than any other man on earth. Be not deceived by those who lie and dissemble to thee, saying thou art master of the world; and who deem no one a Christian, unless he be subject to thee; who prate as if thou hadst power in heaven, in hell, and in purgatory. They are thine enemies, and seek to destroy thy soul. . . . They are all in error who say that thou standest above the council and the body of Christendom, they err who attribute to thee exclusively the power to

interpret the Scriptures. . . . . In short, believe no one who extols thee, but only those who humiliate thee. That is God's will."

Could Luther seriously believe in the possibility of producing any effect upon the pope by words such as these? Such a supposition can, at all events, be accounted for only by complete ignorance and an over-estimate of Leo X.'s vigour and stability of character. It was, in fact, expecting from the voluptuous Medici strength sufficient of his own accord to reform the papacy in the spirit of the Gospel and of the ancient church; freely to descend from the intoxicating theory of ecclesiastical supremacy to the humble evangelical scheme of one superintendent leading bishop presiding at the Christian councils, subject to the newly-awakened public spirit but lately brought to maturity, and also to the increasing knowledge of the community, now boldly struggling upwards. And even if the pope had been capable of so great a resolution, it is yet a question which we are scarcely able to answer, whether the corruption in the condition of the Romish church, which had proceeded so far, could have borne such an attempt to cure it; or whether the deep incision which Luther had made was not unavoidable and indispensable.

This only is certain, that the above attempt at reconciliation made by Miltitz and Luther had not the slightest practical consequences; for the papal bull,

dated June 4, 1520, which pronounced Luther's excommunication if he did not recant within sixty days, was in the meantime actively circulated by Dr. Eck, who had brought it with him from Rome. Luther felt that he ought not to be silent: at first he directed his arms against the vaunting servant, then against the misguided master alone; first against Eck, next against the pope. In the pamphlet against Eck (On Eck's new Bulls and Lies, end of October), he, however, pretended not to believe in the validity of the bull, assuming it to be a fabrication of Dr. Eck's; because the negotiations with Miltitz had not yet been broken off, and the pope would not have confided the publication of the bull of excommunication to his (Luther's) most furious enemy. "I also hear it said that Dr. Eck hath brought with him from Rome a bull against me, said to be so like him, that it might be called Dr. Eck, it is so full of lies and errors; and that he pretends it is the pope's work, although it is his own lying trick." He nevertheless renews his appeal to a general council; the composition of which he presumes to be in conformity with the doctrine of the common priesthood of Christians, not hierarchical, but a free Christian assembly, in which the so-called laity was to be represented. "And I do not strive unreasonably for a free council, in which not only the least learned bishops and the coarsest and maddest sophists, as at Costnitz, but also wise experienced

princes, nobles, and others of the laity should have a seat; for now even our matrons understand more of the Bible and of other Christian matters than Dr. Eck and his fellow-sophists."

A month later (Nov. 1520) he directly attacked the bull, the genuineness of which could no longer be questioned, in the pamphlet, "Against the Bull of Antichrist." Now only, when the pope had openly broken with him, did he feel himself free from all restraint and consideration; now only did he receive a decided proof of the anti-Christian falling away of the papacy, in the fact that the bull sentenced to be burnt all his writings without exception; while he was more certain of this than of his life, that, with all their human imperfections and excrescences, they contained the pure apostolical doctrine. "If I knew that the pope at Rome had issued this bull, and that it was not invented by that arch-liar and knave, Dr. Eck, I would *call on all Christians to regard the pope as nothing better than Antichrist.* And if he do not cease his scandalous and public prohibition of our holding the true faith, the temporal sword ought to resist him with exultation, more readily than any infidel (*Türken*).

"Let every one aid who deems himself a Christian; let him stand by his faith, and by all poor simple souls who are tempted by such great soul-murderers and wolves unto death and damnation. . . . . If the

pope do not condemn and recall this bull, then *no one will doubt that the pope is God's enemy, Christ's persecutor, the desolator of Christendom, and the real Antichrist;* for I have never yet heard that any one hath condemned the Christian faith as this hellish and accursed bull doth."

There occur expressions of wrath in this pamphlet which might be interpreted as an open summons to the destruction of the Romish church by violent means: "What wonder, if princes, nobles, and others were to hit on the head the pope, bishops, monks, and priests, and drive them out of the country! . . . . I hope it is now clear that it is not Dr. Luther, but the pope himself, with bishops, priests, and monks, who strive, by means of this slanderous and infamous bull, for their own destruction, and bring the laity upon them." Similar expressions of the most violent irritation, not shrinking from extremities, are met with throughout this excited period of world-wide schism: "If we punish thieves with the rope, murderers with the sword, and heretics with fire, why do we not also attack with all and any weapons these baneful teachers of corruption, the popes, cardinals, bishops, and the whole swarm of the Romish Sodom, who unceasingly seek to poison the church of God, and corrupt it to the very root; and wash our hands in their blood, that we may save ourselves and our descendants from eternal fire? . . . . They object to

me, that there is danger of stirring up a rebellion against the bishops and spiritual princes: but how if the Word of God be neglected, and the whole people of God be destroyed? Is it right and just that all these souls should perish and die eternally, to keep up the empty temporal pomp of these vain shows? . . . . But if they will not hear the Word of God, but rage and rant, what can more justly befall them than extermination through rebellion? And we should but laugh at it, even if it were to happen, as divine wisdom saith (Prov. i. 26). All those who lend their help, and make use of their lives, property, and reputation, in overturning the bishoprics and the government of the bishops, are beloved children of God, and true Christians, that keep God's commandments, and fight against the tactics of the devil."

Who will deny the impetuous and intolerant spirit which speaks in these words; that spirit which the Saviour of the world rebuked solemnly on one occasion with these words: "Put up thy sword into the sheath?" But who will dare condemn the man, carried away by the whirlwind of this extraordinary strife, for rash and violent speech? From a secure haven we judge him who, in the midst of life and death, fought upon the high seas; who believed what he held most sacred to be persecuted and threatened by Pharisee and Sadducee, by hypocrites on whom he would in angry moments have called down, with

the zeal of Elias, the just punishment of Heaven. Let us, therefore, neither palliate nor condemn, but acknowledge the often-disguised or denied fact, that *such* moments and *such* temptations occurred in Luther's life.

Things had now reached their climax: the pope condemned the German doctor as a heretic, demanded that he should be given up to Rome, and threatened every one with the interdict who protected or harboured him. The doctor, on the other side, declared the pope to be Antichrist, and encouraged the powers of the state and the people to drive the Romish faction from Germany, and if possible to make an end of papacy. "Oh, would to God," he writes to Spalatin, "that the Emperor Charles might prove himself a man, and, for Christ's sake, attack these devils!"

To give to this rupture with Rome a symbolical expression, and to meet the burning of his own writings by a similar measure, Luther proceeded (Dec. 10, 1520) to the public burning of the bull and the papal canon.

In a separate tract ("Why the Books of the Pope and his Disciples have been burnt by Doctor Luther") he justifies this proceeding in a tone of most courageous confidence, conscious of the impossibility of retreat: "I, Martin Luther, styled doctor of the holy Scriptures, an Augustin monk of Wittenberg, hereby make

known to all men, that the writings of the pope and of some of his disciples have been burnt by my advice, will, and assistance."

To pacify and encourage some timid minds, who had been forbidden by their confessors to read Luther's works, he wrote at that time the "Instructions to those about to confess;" in which, opposed to ecclesiastical ordinances, he maintains the most daring deductions from spiritual Christianity: "*If man do not absolve, then God will absolve;* therefore, if thy confessor do not choose to absolve thee, be nevertheless cheerful and confident of absolution. But if the priest refuse the sacrament, thou must again humbly pray for it; for we must ever act with humility towards the devil and his works, yet keep a defiant faith. *And if that be of no use, then give up the sacrament, altar, priest, church: for the Word of God is higher than all things, the soul cannot do without it; but it may do without the sacrament; then will the true Bishop himself feed thee spiritually with that same sacrament.* . . . Therefore, beware of letting any thing upon earth, or if it were possibe, angels from heaven, have so much power as to force thee *against thy conscience* away from the doctrine which thou recognisest and esteemest as divine." Here again we have an expression of incalculable importance, in which the spiritual and individual *religion of the heart* and the external priest-religion of forms and ordinances are placed in direct opposition.

It was as yet doubtful what part the emperor and the empire, the highest dignitaries of the German nation, would take on the occasion of Luther's rupture with Rome; whether they would act with or against Rome; whether they would content themselves with executing the sentence of the pope, or examine the matter for themselves. The emperor was induced by Luther's protector, the Elector Frederick the Wise, to adopt the latter proceeding; and when, influenced by papal negotiations, he attempted, contrary to the opinion of the Diet at Worms, to condemn the accused unheard, he was not allowed to do so, but was compelled (March 6, 1521) to give his consent to the citation of the German monk before the diet, for the purpose of defending his writings.

When Luther first heard of the possibility of a citation to Worms, he wrote to Spalatin (December 21, 1520): "If I should be called upon, I will be carried there sick, if I may not go in health; for it cannot be doubted that I am called by God, if the emperor summon me. If they mean to act with violence in this matter, I will commend it to God; He liveth and reigneth still who preserved the three men in the fiery furnace. But if He will not sustain me, my head is but a poor thing as compared with Christ, who was put to death with the greatest ignominy. For in this we must not weigh the weal or woe of any one, but rather take heed not to desert

the Gospel which we have received, nor suffer it to become a scoff and scorn to the godless, nor be afraid of shedding our blood for it. . . . . Yet would I rather perish alone by the hands of the Romanists than have the emperor involved in this affair. . . . . But if it is to be so, that I am to be delivered over, not only to the high priest, but to the Gentiles also, then God's will be done. Expect of me every thing *but that I shall fly or recant;* for I can do neither without danger to the cause of religion and to the salvation of many."

To his elector he declared (January 25, 1521): "I am prepared, in humble obedience, as soon as a safe-conduct be granted me, to appear on the coming sitting of the diet, before judges as learned as they are pious and above suspicion; and with the help of the Almighty, so to defend myself that all shall learn I have acted hitherto without any thoughtless, arbitrary, or malicious motives, *but according to my conscience, oath, and duty, as a poor teacher of the Scriptures, to the glory of God, for the advantage of the whole German people, for the extirpation of dangerous abuses and superstitions, and for the liberation of Christendom from this most unchristian and tyrannical degradation and blasphemy.*" We perceive that when about to appear before the highest tribunal of his country, he was fully conscious that the motives which had guided him for years were: to satisfy his conscience

in accordance with the Scriptures, to liberate Christianity from an unworthy spiritual bondage, and to promote the welfare of his country.

At length (March 26) the imperial herald, Caspar Sturm, appeared to escort him; in the beginning of April he commenced his journey to Worms, where he arrived on the 16th of the same month. On passing through Naumburg, the portrait of a hero spiritually allied to him,—the Dominican Savonarola, the Italian who had borne witness with his blood against the degraded papacy,—was presented to him as an encouragement upon his thorny path. All warnings against, and intimations of, the danger he was going to meet, he repelled with unshaken firmness: "And if they were to make a fire as high as heaven from Wittenberg to Worms, yet will I appear in the name of the Lord, place my foot upon the mouth of Behemoth, profess Christ, and trust in him." "Christ liveth," he writes to Spalatin, April 14th; "and we shall get to Worms in despite of all the gates of hell and the princes of the air!"

At his first examination (April 17th) he demanded and obtained one day for consideration; though only one hour after this he wrote to Cuspinian, "I shall not recant, so Christ be gracious unto me." Was the asking this delay a mere form; or did the importance of the day and the assembly weigh so heavily upon his soul, that he wanted time once more to examine

LUTHER BEFORE THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPIRE.

himself and his cause before he gave his decisive answer? The hour so weighty in its consequence arrived on the evening of Thursday, April 18, 1521. He was to answer the twofold question: Whether he recognised as his own the writings that had appeared under his name, and whether he would recant them? The first he answered with 'yes,' the other with 'no,' giving his reasons in detail. He met the request "that he would give a short answer without any arguments," with the celebrated words, in which he concentrates his entire history and position, his whole mind and its imperishable significance:

"*Unless I be vanquished by evidence from the holy Scriptures, or by clear and distinct arguments, I am so bound up and imprisoned in my conscience and the Word of God, that I can and may not recant; because it is neither safe nor well-advised to act in any way against conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me!*"

We scarcely overrate the importance of that great day when we assert, *that then only came into being true German Protestantism*, the immeasurable consequences of which were to shake and reform the world. It was the solemn appearance of a new moral power in the world's history, rooted in the depth of religious conviction, and closely connected with irresistible political and intellectual instincts and wants. The religious dignity of spiritual individuality, the sanc-

tity of conscience, the inviolability of its convictions, celebrated in that great hour their decisive victory. Solemnly before all the world was the doctrine then made known, that no human power or authority ought to affect the true inheritance of the soul; that every higher conviction, every conception and appropriation of divine matters and of eternal truth, could only spring from the sacred soil of liberty, from the depth of moral individuality;—a doctrine which, it is true, involved a very sea of dangers, but to which we assuredly owe the highest and most sublime degree of development of which mankind is susceptible in its earthly phases. "In worldly matters we are bound to believe and confide in each other," Luther wrote to the Emperor Charles, April 28th; "*but if the matter concern the Word of God and our eternal welfare, God doth not suffer us to be exposed to the danger of allowing one man to impose his own view upon another, or to decide for him.* For He willeth that all men should be subject unto Him; He having alone the glory and honour of being truthful, nay, truth itself. . . . . This faith, submission, and humility, is indeed the true worship and adoration, which should be given to no creature."

Those weighty words spoken at Worms were based upon the principle, that in the last appeal there are but two sources of religious conviction, of divine truth, "the evidence of the holy Scriptures, and clear

distinct grounds;" in other words, *divine revelation in the Scriptures and in the human understanding;* the convincing power of the divine spirit which breathes in the pages of the oldest and purest Christian documents, which still speaks daily to our hearts and understandings as irresistible comprehension and experience. Spoken, as it was, with perfect simplicity, without any striving after systems, yet did this proposition contain the germ of spiritual struggles and consequent developments to be achieved by centuries, and powerfully influencing every thinking mind even to the present time. The two points on that occasion, still peaceably placed side by side,—the evidence of the Scriptures and of the understanding,—diverged afterwards into separate paths, and form, in their struggles and attempts at reconciliation, the principal facts in the history of Protestantism. Protestant faith in the Bible, and Protestant individual belief, the twin-children of the Reformation, separated and fought against each other like contending brothers, who cannot, after all, deny their common origin; only that in the one case the authority of revelation in Scripture asserted pre-eminence; in the other, the power of individual judgment, of daily internal and external experience. But on some future day the two grand divisions of Protestantism shall unite again in a higher bond than on that day at Worms.

After the public audience on the 18th of April,

Luther attempted several private negotiations, which led, however, to no result. He left Worms (April 26th, in the certainty that the emperor also would condemn him; as indeed happened in the following month. The imperial edict issued against him (dated May 8th, although only published on the 26th) declared him a confirmed schismatic and open heretic, and demanded his being given up to the emperor; whoever should protect or harbour him was threatened with imperial proscription.

The noble sympathy and foresight of the Elector of Saxony saved Luther from the storm which was gathering around him; it is well known that he caused him to be secretly carried to a secure asylum at the Wartburg (May 4, 1521). "If it were in my power," so wrote that gentle and faithful prince to his brother, "I would gladly help Martin to his right. . . . . But God will assuredly not forsake the righteous cause."

Luther was made acquainted with the well-meant design of the elector, and agreed to it; for he wrote (at Frankfort, on his return from Worms, April 28) to Lucas Kranach at Wittenberg: "I allow them to imprison and conceal me, I myself know not where; and although I would rather have suffered death through the tyrants, particularly by the hands of the enraged Duke George of Saxony, yet must I not despise the advice of good people until the time come.

. . . . I must be silent and suffer for a time. A little while, and the world seeth me no more; again a little while, and ye shall see me, saith Christ. I hope it may be the same now. But the will of God, which is the wisest, be done in this matter on earth as it is in heaven."

Many mourned over the reformer, who had so suddenly quitted the scene and vanished without leaving any traces behind, as over one secretly murdered or imprisoned. In the journal of Albrecht Dürer we find the affecting lamentations of one of the staunchest of patriots: "O God! if Luther be dead, who will then interpret the holy Gospel to us so plainly! Oh, how much more might he have done in the next ten or twenty years! If they have murdered him, he hath suffered for Christian truth, and for having attacked the unchristian papacy, which strives against the liberty of Christ. We pray thee, O heavenly Father, to grant thy Holy Spirit to another man like this one, who wrote more clearly than any other during the last 140 years, that he may reassemble thy holy Christian church from all parts; so that we may once more lead a Christian life, and from our good works all unbelievers may be induced to join us and embrace the Christian faith."

This is a voice from the heart of the people, which shows us with what hopes and expectations the more thinking portion of the nation had greeted Luther's

appearance. The liberation, purification, and reunion of the Christian church were the desire of all the better-minded among the people; and they deemed the powerful monk of Wittenberg especially called to achieve this great end.

In the mean time, he whom they thought dead was living and working mightily in his Patmos, notwithstanding the concealment and his disguise as "Master George."

While struggling with bodily ailments and mental troubles,—he was dissatisfied, for instance, with his own conduct at Worms, and grieved that he should have suppressed his spirit instead of exhibiting the strength of Elias before those idols,—and in addition to numerous pamphlets and letters to friends, fighting his enemies and encouraging his friends, he began a labour which alone would have sufficed to make him immortal; a labour, the consequences of which outshine and outlive all others,—*the translation of the Bible*. In giving to his nation the original documents on which Christianity is founded in their own tongue, he gained over to his great cause in all time the millions, who will never again consent to be deprived of the right to study the spirit of Christianity at its original source. Through the translation of the Bible the Reformation became invincible.

Luther's struggle against Rome, so prominent in the history of the world, may be reduced to distinct

groupings in three words, "Wittenberg, Worms, Wartburg." From Wittenberg emanated the loud and ever-increasing protest against the degradation and enslaving of Christian truth, against the depravity of the visible church. At Worms the right to freedom of conscience was vindicated, and, we may say, solemnly admitted into the world by an act of courage arising from conviction. At the Wartburg, finally, the labour was begun which gave to the nation, at the same time, the most powerful weapon against spiritual slavery, and the most fruitful germ of religious progress and development.

In this sense the words, Wittenberg, Worms, Wartburg, express the lasting and universal importance of Luther's work, and the true character of original German Protestantism.

THIRD SKETCH.

REFORMATION AND REVOLUTION.

Luther's residence at the Wartburg is the conclusion of the first great period of his labour, during which his mind first conceived the principle of the Reformation, and *he* alone advocated it against the papacy and the temporal powers. In his seclusion he had ample opportunity for looking back on the four extraordinary years of the grand struggle, and preparing himself for new enterprises.

The principle of the Reformation had found in Luther the organ through which to impart its spirit; but it was now to be ascertained whether he would stand the severe twofold test of resisting the internal enemies who, under the mask of religious and political consistency, sought to direct the movement, and to change reformation into revolution; and whether, after having avoided this danger, he would be able to carry through a comprehensive organisation, either as the foundation of a new church or the renovation of the old one.

RESISTANCE TO THE RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION.

The reform movement on religious ground might have been driven onward to revolution, if the connexion between historical revelation, the historical character of Christ, and ecclesiastical tradition and government, had been utterly sundered. Luther perceived the danger of such a breaking-away from all historical Christianity in the more and more manifest attempts *to undermine the authority of the Scripture and of the sacrament.* It appeared to him a departure from or a lowering of the meaning of Scripture, when enthusiasts (the people of Zwickau and the Anabaptists), relying upon their "inward call" (*inneres Wort*), their own individual inspiration, placed themselves above the Scriptures, and so sought to gain the victory for unconditional subjectivity, for individual free-will in all divine matters. In the same way he deemed it a perversion and degradation of the sacrament to denude it of its mystic and objective meaning, and to look upon it only as a symbol and token, as the enthusiastic Anabaptists and the sober matter-of-fact Karlstadt and Zwingle did. In Luther's opinion, the continuance of a visible external church would by this means have been rendered impossible, the connexion with the divine Head of the church interrupted, future Christianity

divided into small sects, and the masses would have fallen back partly into heathenism, partly into popery.

To prevent such lamentable results, he asserted with increasing energy the fundamental principle, that the true church is to be known by the Word and the sacrament, that divine revelation speaks to us most emphatically through the Scriptures. His struggle against the fanatics and sacramentalists (*Schwärmgeister und Sacramentirer*)—so he called his opponents in the ranks of the Protestants—does now, therefore, assume a prominent position by the side of his earlier warfare against Rome. .

It brought him back to Wittenberg, where, during his absence, these fanatical and revolutionary ideas had gained ground. They had been suppressed at Zwickau, but made a proselyte of Karlstadt, and even imposed upon Melanchthon. It was, indeed, an eruption of that volcanic fire, which, hidden in quiet times below the surface, breaks forth in decisive epochs and crises with often destructive force, as the beginning of a semi-spiritual semi-temporal revolution, having its origin in the popular imagination. The longing for an unattainable happiness, for some Utopia on earth, — that perpetual longing of the human heart, so easily fanned into flame in the breasts of the lower classes, the poor and wretched,—had found a bold expression, a decided sanction, in an enthusiastic

brotherhood at Zwickau. Luther's proposed reforms were deemed here partial and insufficient. As the recipients of inward and direct divine revelations, they believed themselves to have a prophetic call for the social and religious reorganisation of the world, which, as the promised kingdom of God, was to begin by the destruction of the ungodly, and the gathering together of the saints or children of God. The whole existing order of church and state was to be destroyed to the very foundation, to make room for a state of perfect blessedness and purity (the millennium), to be introduced solely by these prophets themselves, who had been called by God to become his lawgivers and high-priests. This is the fundamental idea upon which the fanatics at Zwickau attempted to build (1521); the same course was pursued (1525) at Mühlhausen, and (1534) at Münster. Similar seductive pictures of the imagination, painted with the glowing colours of enthusiasm and desire, were previously conceived by the secret sects of the middle ages. They have all the same origin, and appear at periods favourable to their nature, although under different names, even in our own times.

At Zwickau several cloth-weavers, such as Nicholas Storch, and a young man educated at Wittenberg, Marcus Stübner, took the lead in these movements; and the preacher Thomas Münzer was doubtless, in a spiritual sense at least, in connexion with them; in

knowledge he was superior to them all. They were banished from Zwickau (at the end of 1521), ere they had obtained sufficient influence to establish a "reign of terror," and went, some to Bohemia (Münzer): some to Wittenberg, as Stübner, Storch, and others.

Luther was made acquainted with these circumstances while yet at the Wartburg, and hastened to admonish his friends at Wittenberg not to decide too quickly in this affair, but soberly to try "these spirits," whether the pretended prophets could give proofs of their divine call, and whether they had passed through the true "spiritual conflict, the second birth, death and hell:" if not, they could not have the sign of the Son of man, the touchstone which alone could prove the Christian, and were not to be believed.

But when Karlstadt was led away by these fanatics to take part in their iconoclastic mischief, in the intentional, reckless, and coarse disregard of all forms; when the community at Wittenberg was in danger of being dispersed through license and insubordination,—Luther could no longer remain in his retreat. He felt that the cause of the Reformation was threatened with greater danger from the blind fanatical proceedings of those who had hitherto been his adherents than from his open opponents; he left his asylum, that he might meet the danger before it became irremediable.

Outlawed by the emperor, excommunicated by the pope, he departed from the Wartburg (May 3, 1522), to oppose a former friend, and resist a movement which boasted of his name and spirit. He went to Wittenberg contrary to the advice, nay the command of his prince; of the only one who had hitherto protected him, but had informed him that at Wittenberg he should not now be able to continue that protection. This was another of the great moments of Luther's life, in which he stands before us in the full strength of his faith, as the hero and leader of his time. On his journey from the Wartburg, he wrote at Borna to the elector (March 5) the extraordinary letter, which may appear to some as a bold defiance, to others as the most heroic trust in God: "I would wish to condole with your serene highness, not on my account, but on account of the stupid business at Wittenberg, which has arisen among our people to the disgrace of the Gospel; *for I myself have been so oppressed with grief*, that were I not sure that we hold the true Gospel, I should ere this have despaired of our cause. All that hath been inflicted upon me hitherto is as nothing, or only as a mere mockery, when compared with this. If it had been possible, I would willingly have given my life that it should not have happened; for that hath been done which we cannot answer for either to God or to the world; and yet it is laid to my charge, and worse still, to the charge of the holy Gospel.

"As far as I am concerned, your grace, I answer thus: Your grace knows — or if you do not know, I now make it known unto you—that I have received the Gospel, not from men, but from heaven alone, through our Lord Jesus Christ; I would willingly have boasted—as I mean to do in future—and signed myself his servant and evangelist. I did not offer myself for examination and judgment because I was in doubt, but from becoming humility, and to give an example to others. But as I now see that my too-great humility tends to the discredit of the Gospel, and that the devil will take possession of the whole ground if I grant him a hand's breadth, I must, to satisfy my conscience, act differently. I have given way long enough to your grace in remaining quiet this year (from May 1521 to March 1522). For the devil knows very well that I have not done so from lack of courage; he knew my heart when I arrived at Worms, that if I had known that as many devils waited for me as there are tiles upon the roofs, I should nevertheless have leapt among them with joy. . . . And since our Father, in his boundless mercy, hath given us, through the Gospel, the victory over all devils and death, and the full assurance that we may call him 'our beloved Father,' your grace may judge yourself that it would be the highest offence against such a Father, not to confide in him sufficiently to make us superior to the anger of Duke George. I

can say of myself, that if this matter stood at Leipzic as it stands at Wittenberg, I should nevertheless ride thither, even if it rained for nine days nothing but Duke Georges, and each one were nine times more enraged than this one is. He takes my Lord Jesus to be a man of straw; this my Master and I may well bear for a time. . . . I have prayed and wept for him more than once, that the Lord would enlighten him; I will pray and weep once more, but for the last time. I could quickly throttle him with one word, if that would settle the matter. . . . This has been written in the supposition that your grace knows I come to Wittenberg under a much higher protection than that of the elector. . . . Neither do I intend to demand protection from your grace. Indeed, I hold that I can protect your grace much better than you can protect me. Besides, if I knew that your grace could and would protect me, I should not come. In this cause, the sword neither can nor ought to decide or help; God only must decide in it, without any human care or help. Therefore he who hath most faith can protect most. Now as I perceive that your grace is still very weak in the faith, I cannot look upon your grace as the man that could protect or save me. God wills not either your grace's care and striving or mine. He wills it to be left to him. If your grace believeth, you will be safe and have peace; if you do not believe, I do; and must leave your grace, in your

unbelief, to the torment and trouble to which those are exposed who have not faith. Before men your grace ought to take this course. Be obedient, as elector, to your superiors; give way to his imperial majesty, according to the laws of the empire; and do not oppose or resist the temporal power, if it seek to capture or kill me: for no one is to oppose or resist the temporal power, if it seek to capture or kill me: for no one is to oppose or resist the powers that be, except He who has appointed them; otherwise, it is rebellion and against God. . . . If your grace believed, you would see the glory of God; but as you do not believe, you have as yet seen nothing."

This letter certainly stands alone of its kind in history. It unquestionably offers to an opponent many a handle for condemnation; it contains passages (the threat, for instance, that he could kill Duke George with a word, and other similar phrases) which, on cool reflection, might be regarded as expressing temerity, and an exaggerated estimate of self. But only he who can place himself completely in Luther's position at that time,—who can thoroughly estimate *the elevation of spirit, the sublime confidence which fills the soul that has, after long struggles and doubts, resolved to place itself and the cause it seeks to promote, unconditionally and prepared for all consequences, under the immediate sole protection of God*,—only *he* has the right to point out the unbecoming and repulsive

features which are exhibited here, and on many other occasions, by the side of the divinely great qualities of the hero's mind; namely, a tendency to pride and temerity, rooted in his nature, and aggravated by the events of his life, combined with a want of moderation in the expression of his feelings, temper, and passions.

And how mild, attractive, and admirable he appears to us, soon after writing this letter, in the hostelry of the Black Bear at Jena, at the well-known meeting with the two Swiss students, who took him for Ulrich of Hutten; or in the scene with the merchants, who, without knowing him, expressed the anxious wish to be allowed but once to confess to Luther, they having just then bought his last publication! How impressively does that man speak to our hearts, who can converse with old and young,—have a jest for the one, edification for the other,—while standing on a volcano which may swallow him up at any moment!

What were the weapons with which he meant to oppose the storm that had broken out at Wittenberg? Most decidedly the same doctrine to which he had borne witness at Worms against other opponents,—the *assertion of Christian freedom of conscience.* Not even in the name and under the pretence of freedom, was compulsion to be practised against the weaker parties, whose conscience could not yet bear such freedom. To the blind bigotry which rejected all

forms, he opposed the divine command of love, as a barrier for the protection of the weaker or more peaceable brethren, who still clung to the traditional form. "Dear brethren," he cried, in the first of his eight Lenten sermons, by which he put a stop to the prevailing disorders, "the kingdom of God, which is in us, consists not in speeches or words, but in deeds, in works, and exercises. God will have no mere listeners or repeaters, but followers, labourers in the faith through love. *For faith without love is not sufficient; indeed it is not faith, but only the appearance of faith:* as a face seen in a mirror is not a real face, but only a reflection. . . . Therefore let us feed others with milk, as we have been fed, until they also become strong in the faith." In the second sermon on the Monday after Invocavit, he says; "*Summa summarum!* I will preach it, I will say it, I will write it; but I will not force or urge any one with violence; *for faith must come readily, without constraint and without violence.* Take example by me. I have been opposed to indulgences and to popery, but have not used violence. I have only practised, preached, and written the Word of God; I have done nothing else. This, while I slept, while I drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip and Amsdorf, has done so much that popery has become greatly weakened, and no prince or emperor has done it so much damage. I have done nothing; the Word has done and accomplished all.

If I had chosen to act violently, I might have caused much bloodshed in Germany; indeed, I might have begun a game at Worms that should have left the emperor without security. But what would it be? A fool's game, and a destruction of body and soul. . . . . How think ye the devil judges when people want to carry their point with violence? He sits behind in hell, and thinks: Oh, what a fine game the fools are playing! But he is vexed *when we act according to the Word, and let that only influence us. That is almighty*, that taketh the heart prisoner; and when that is imprisoned, the devil's work must fall away of itself." "The kingdom of God," he says in his fifth Lenten sermon, "consists not in external things, which you may seize or feel, but in faith. . . . *Therefore is nothing new to be introduced unless the Gospel be thoroughly preached and known.*"

He therefore sets forth, as the fundamental conditions of the Reformation, the two demands, *liberty and order. Entire liberty of conscience*, which need be subject to no other power than the unconquerable inward power of truth (the Word); and *maintenance of good order* at every unavoidable innovation, to be insisted on by the lawful temporal authorities, but never by disorderly masses.

Luther's powers of persuasion and his great influence succeeded in speedily guiding the overflowing stream back to its channel. Those who could not be

convinced, were yet (like Karlstadt) persuaded to keep quiet for a time, and be silent: others, the enthusiasts of Zwickau, had to leave the town. And quiet was restored for a time; but it was only the quiet which precedes a tempest.

The desire for radical change, checked by Luther, was, however, soon reanimated, and found in Münzer and Karlstadt the leaders, who laboured at first separately, but at length, by uniting their efforts, succeeded during the following years in opening a way for it. If Karlstadt was the first representative of the *doctrinal rupture* among the Protestants, which was promoted at a later period, with infinitely greater talent and true vocation, by Zwingle, Œcolampadus, and those who thought with them,—Thomas Münzer represented most decidedly the *political rupture*, which soon announced itself boldly in the midst of the Reformation. Luther collected all his strength for the victory over both these opponents. *Through this struggle and its consequences he became the founder of Lutheranism, as he had become the guide and founder of German Protestantism in the previous struggle.*

Karlstadt had, in the beginning of the year 1524, resumed at Orlamünde the career interrupted at Wittenberg in 1522. He was completely governed by a fanatical and subjective spiritualism; and being

banished the country by the elector, gave the signal for the unhappy disputations concerning the sacrament, by an attack upon Luther's mystical interpretation of the same. Luther met him in person at Orlamünde, but without success, and opposed him afterwards relentlessly in many polemical writings.

In the letter addressed "To the Christians at Strasburg" (Dec. 15, 1524), he declares: "If our gospel be the true gospel, of which I have no doubt, it must be attacked, tried, and probed from both sides: on the one, by external worldly disgrace and the hatred of its enemies; on the other, by our own separation and dissensions. Christ must not only have Caiaphas among his enemies, but also Judas among his friends. Therefore must we be neither astonished nor frightened if dissensions arise among us, but boldly reflect that it must and will be so; and pray to God that he may be with us, and keep us in the right path. . . . . For I have learnt that Dr. Karlstadt hath raised a great disturbance among you with his fanaticism and sacrament, his images and baptism, as he has done elsewhere also."

The manner in which Luther takes up and judges the position of his opponents is remarkable: "His case appears to me to be this: *he falls with as great violence upon external things, as if the whole power of a Christian being depended upon the destruction of images, casting aside the sacraments, and preventing baptism;*

as if he meant by this smoke and vapour to darken the sun, the light of the gospel, and the principal articles of Christian faith, so that the world might no longer see, and forget all that hath been hitherto taught by us! . . . . This is therefore a clumsy devil, that I care little for. Now it is my best advice and warning, that you should confine yourselves to the single question: What constitutes a Christian? If any one make a proposition, begin and say: Dear friend, does this make a Christian? if not, then do not regard it as important, nor dwell upon it seriously. But if an individual be too weak for this, then let him wait and see what we or others say to it. I have managed very well hitherto, God be thanked, with essentials; I hope I may not now fail with regard to externals."

These words, as well as the whole course of the dissension, show unmistakably that the difference was as much personal as controversial. Luther hated and abhorred the stormy and violent passions, the immoderate estimation of the value of external points, and the want of true liberality and humanity, which accompanied this feverish and intrinsically meaningless revolutionary movement. A dissension of this kind will take place at all times and every where, when true liberality and deep religious feeling connect themselves with heartless and spiritually crude radicalism, in opposition to a common enemy. The

casual and temporary connexion is unavoidably and speedily changed for keen opposition; the more keen and intense, the nearer the opinions of the parties previously stood to each other, as was the case between Luther and Karlstadt. The former was principally influenced in his opposition to the latter by the great doctrinal points at issue; but the idea that the direction of the great reform movement, which had hitherto been confided to him alone, should now pass into other hands, and these so clumsy and unskilled, no doubt greatly increased the bitterness of his feelings.

In the letter (to the Christians at Strasburg) a passage occurs, the full meaning of which has been rarely estimated at its real importance — a passage which gives us an insight into the very depth of his character and his train of thought: "This much I confess: if Dr. Karlstadt or any one else could have convinced me five years ago that there was nothing but bread and wine in the sacrament, *he would have rendered me a great service.* I have undergone great temptations, and struggled and striven *to get free of this, because I saw clearly that with this I could have given the severest blow to popery. But I am bound; I cannot get free of it; the text is too strong, and cannot be wrested from its sense by words.* Indeed, if it could happen even now that any one could prove to me on firm grounds that simple bread and wine was present,

they would not need to attack me with so much fury: *I am, alas, but too much inclined to it, as far as I know my sinful nature* (meinen Adam). But the way in which Dr. Karlstadt raves about it affects me so little, *that my opinion becomes only stronger through it.* And if I had not believed it before, such lame, loose fooleries, without any evidence, grounded only on human sense and conceit, would at once make me believe that his opinion must be naught." It is evident that Luther, in the interest of his struggle against Rome, had been strongly inclined to accept the symbolical meaning of the word used in the institution of the Lord's supper; and even at the period above alluded to, his understanding (his old Adam) would have decided for this interpretation: but then, as before, the impressiveness of the scriptural words restrained him; they seemed to him not to admit of any other than a literal sense; a symbolical interpretation appeared as an offence against the conscientious exposition of Scripture: "the text was too powerful for him." And yet from this controversy, whether a figurative acceptation of those words were admissible to the Christian or not, arose the schism in the profession of faith which for centuries violently separated Protestantism into two distinct camps.

On this occasion Luther expressed strong doubts, also, of the political opinions of Karlstadt; although the latter had declared, in direct opposition to

Münzer's proceedings, "we will not have recourse to blows and spears." "Karlstadt had nearly persuaded me at Jena," writes Luther, "that I ought not to confound his spirit with that of the rebellious murderous people of Allstedt* (Münzer's party). But when I came to Orlamünde among his Christians, I soon saw what kind of seed he had sown; and I might be thankful that I was not driven out with stones and dirt. As it was, many gave me these and similar benedictions: 'Go, in the name of a thousand ——!' 'May you break your neck before you get out of the town!'"

At the conclusion of the letter he once more rises grandly above all the personalities which had been mixed up with the struggle: "Let every one look only for the straight path; what law, gospel, faith, the kingdom of Christ, Christian freedom, love, patience, human law, &c. are; *that is enough for us to learn for all time.* I beg of your Gospellers to direct you away from Luther or Karlstadt, but ever towards Christ: not as Karlstadt does, solely pointing out the works of Christ as an example (which is the least portion of Christ, and in which he resembles other saints); but how he is a gift of God, or, as St. Paul says, He is made unto us of God the power, wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and sanctification of God *which meaning these prophets have never felt, tasted, or learned;*

* A small town in Thuringia, where Münzer lived as preacher.

and cackle, therefore, with their living voice from heaven, many bombastic words (*schwülstige Worte*) which they themselves never understood, and by which they only confound tender consciences."

That which he had hastily and briefly stated in his "Letter to the Christians at Strasburg," he further explains in the "Treatise against the Heavenly Prophets" (Jan. 1525), so impressively, that this was plainly intended to be the decisive and annihilating blow against the whole movement: "Dr. Andreas Karlstadt," it is said in the beginning of this pamphlet, "has separated himself from us, and has become our worst foe. Christ did not mean to inspire terror, but give us his mind and courage, that we may not err and tremble before this Satan, who pretends that he will justify the sacrament, *but who has very different intentions, namely, to corrupt the whole doctrine of the Gospel by the cunning handling of the Scriptures.* . . . . . These ambitious prophets do nothing but destroy images, break down churches, do away with the sacraments, and seek for a peculiar chosen mortification of the flesh. *Neither have they hitherto acted according to the doctrine of faith, nor taught how to encourage conscience, which is nevertheless the first and most important part of the Christian doctrine.* And if they had achieved all; if no image existed, no church were standing, no one believed any longer that the flesh and blood of Christ are in the sacrament; and

if all went about in the grey coats of the peasant (such as Karlstadt wore for some time, to do away with all distinction of rank),—what would be gained by it? Would they have become Christians by it? Where would faith and love be? were they to come only afterwards? . . . . . Fame and honour, and a fresh monastic glory, might be gained by it; *but conscience will not be the better for it;* nor do such false spirits care for this. . . . *Therefore must we have something higher to liberate and to comfort conscience; and this is the Holy Ghost,* which cannot be obtained by the destruction of images or any other work, but solely through faith and the Gospel."

Luther's boldest and most authoritative assertion against the position Karlstadt and those connected with him had taken up, was contained in the cutting words, that *their opinions were essentially a falling back from Christianity to Judaism, from the Gospel to the books of Moses:* "Well then, we will come to the true point, and say that these prophets of Moses are to leave us unconnected with Moses; we will neither hear nor see Moses. How like ye this, my dear banded spirits (*Rottengeister*)? We say further, that all such Mosaic teachers deny the Gospel, banish Christ, and abolish the whole New Testament. I speak now as a Christian and for Christians. For Moses has been given to the Jewish people only, and does not concern us heathens and Christians; we have

our Gospel and the New Testament. Thanks are due to the pious Paul, with Isaiah, for having so long before saved us from these confederate spirits; else we might sit on the Sabbath-day and lean our head on our hand, and wail for the voice from heaven, as they pretend to do. Indeed, if Karlstadt were to write further about the Sabbath, Sunday would have to give way, and the Sabbath — that is to say, Saturday—must be kept holy; he would truly make us Jews in all things, and we should come to be circumcised: for that is true, and cannot be denied, that he who deems it necessary to keep one law of Moses, and keeps it as the law of Moses, must deem all necessary, and keep them all. It is not only the law of Moses that says, 'thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not steal,' &c., *but the natural law that is written in every one's heart*, as Paul teacheth. . . . . Else, if it were not written in every one's heart, the law would have to be taught and preached long enough ere conscience adopted it. Now if the law of Moses and the law of nature be one, that law will remain, and cannot be abolished externally, except through faith spiritually; therefore is image-worship, the observance of the Sabbath, and all that Moses hath added to the law of nature, not binding upon us. Therefore let Moses be 'the Saxon mirror'* for the Jews, and not

* *Sachsenspiegel:* a collection of laws made during the middle ages, and established in the greatest part of northern and central

perplex us heathens (*i. e.* heathen Christians) with it. Why do we teach and keep the ten commandments? *Because the laws of nature are no where so subtly and compactly instituted as in Moses.* And I could wish to take some other temporal matters from Moses; such as, the law of separation (of married persons), the year of jubilee, the year of release, tithes, and other things; by which laws the world would be better ruled than now with the law of interest, of buying and selling, and giving in marriage:—in the same manner as one land takes example by the laws of another, as the Romans took the twelve tables from the Greeks. . . . . Neither is it necessary to keep the Sabbath or Sunday on account of the law of Moses, but because nature teaches that a day of rest is necessary to refresh man and beast, which natural reason Moses gives for his Sabbath. If it is to be kept for rest only, it is clear that he who needs not rest may break the Sabbath, and rest another day instead, as nature dictates. The Sabbath is also to be kept for preaching and hearing the word of God."

The above extract deserves to be quoted *in extenso*, because it is not only important as repudiating the indistinct and over-strained Jewish ideas of Luther's

Germany; incorporated with others were portions of the Roman and canonical law. This collection of laws is highly esteemed in our day, and a new edition of it appeared in Berlin as late as 1835. The present laws of Saxony are founded upon it.

opponents, but because it gives at the same time a striking proof of the freedom from prejudice, and of the elevation of Christian views which he attains wherever overpowering prejudice or the bitterness of debate do not blind him.

In this pamphlet also he attributes great importance to the social and political dangers arising from Karlstadt's opinions, whose violent proceedings he calls upon the magistrates to check: "I intend, so God will, to flatter no prince; but still less will I suffer that the banding together and disobedience of the people should bring about contempt of constituted authorities. And it is my humble admonition and prayer to all princes, sovereigns, and authorities, seriously to insist that those preachers who do not teach quietly, but seduce the people and destroy images and churches behind the backs of the authorities, should *at once be banished the country, and be dealt with in such a manner as to compel them to desist.* I do not by this means want to impede the preaching of the Word of God, but put a stop to the mischievous doings of the impious enthusiasts and riotous bands, which it behoves the magistrate to do. . . If the masses are to have the right and the power to execute *one* law of God in this way, it will be necessary to permit them afterwards to execute all the laws; *they* must, in that case (instead of the proper authorities), kill the murderers, punish the adulterers and thieves,

—whoever can manage it first. After that it will go further, and they will have to kill all ungodly persons; for so Moses commands (Deut. vii.). . . . . Those bands of murderers, because they apply the law of Moses to the people (rabble), are impelled to rebellion, to murder, and to kill, as to a work which God hath commanded. Take the town-spirit (Thomas Münzer) as an example. . . . . When he had got so far intimate with the devil (*den Teufel zu Gevattern gebeten hatte*) that the rabble could destroy the images without proper authority, he was compelled also to go further, and order the people to commit murder. . . Dear sirs, the devil careth not for the destruction of images; but he wants to use it as an opening, that he may shed blood and commit murder in the world.

"I ask no longer what Dr. Karlstadt says or does, —I speak of the spirit which impels his followers: it is not a good one, and means murder and rebellion, however he may bow and scrape. . . . . For if Karlstadt were to bring a great mob about him, as he intended when he thought of arming on the Saale, and the Scriptures are read in German, what would he do if *Master Omnes* (the mob) were to place the command 'to kill the wicked' before him? how would he guard against that? If he had never intended to agree to this, he would yet have to consent, for they would resist him and cry: Here stands the Word of God: we must carry it out! It is not well to play with

Master Omnes; therefore hath God instituted authority, that the world may be well ordered. . . . Karlstadt drags the 'heavenly prophets' about with him, which have originated the Allstedt (Münzer's) spirit: of these he learns; with these he abides. They sneak about the country, and creep together along the banks of the Saale, where they intend to make their nest. . . . . They cast their poison about in secret, and infuse it into Dr. Karlstadt, that he may spread it abroad with tongue and pen. . . . . These prophets teach that they are to reform Christianity, and establish a new one in the following manner: they are to strangle all princes and all the wicked, that they may become masters, and live among none but saints upon earth. This I and many others have heard from themselves. *Karlstadt knows this also, and yet shuns them not;* and I am to believe that he doth not seek murder and rebellion? . . . . As they are bent upon strangling and murder, they can only proceed from the devil himself, even though they knew all wisdom and the Scriptures. Is it not vexatious that the people should have become here and there disquieted and proud, before the princes were aware of it? And if they hear a preacher who bids them be peaceable and obedient to authority, they call him at once a calumniator and the hypocritical servant of princes, and point at him with their fingers. But if he say, Kill, kill! give way to no one;

ye are the real people, &c.,—they call him the true evangelical preacher."

At the conclusion of this work he once more rests his warnings against Karlstadt and his prophet on the two counts: that they go about and teach without a call; and that they avoid and fly from the principal point in the Christian doctrine, *how we may rid ourselves of our sins, have a quiet conscience, and acquire a peaceable cheerful heart in God*, in which all true power lies.

It is a proof of Luther's sound views and tact, that he recognised in the Karlstadt movement, in spite of the apparently peaceable theory of this unstable, ambitious, narrow-minded, and short-sighted man, the destructive revolutionary element, which threatened to evoke a rude democracy both in faith and morals, in doctrine and life. Nevertheless, the conflict with Karlstadt proved a serious injury to his cause, a painful expenditure of mental energy which was lost for other more beneficial objects, which had the most important consequences on the organised development of Protestantism, and from which Germany has suffered and is still suffering. The same may be said, in a still higher degree, of the continuation of the controversy respecting the sacrament, which Karlstadt had originated, and which, on his being set aside, was resumed and carried on by the reformers of Switzerland and of the south of Germany.

RESISTANCE TO THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

The lever, however, had long been applied, which, by the help of the religious ideas represented by Luther, was to bring about a complete political and social revolution. We have already, at the beginning of this section, mentioned Thomas Münzer, as the boldest and most notorious leader of this movement, who, with infinitely greater courage and fanaticism than Karlstadt, endeavoured to realise the idea of an entire overthrow of the existing order in church and state, and in society at large.

While threatened by the storm impending from this quarter, Luther maintained the principle he had previously defended against Karlstadt: *The Word must do all.* It was his great design to overthrow the papacy, reform the church, and save Germany by conviction alone, by the still small voice of truth. He repudiated violence from the first, and most decidely when it assumed the appearance of revolt and recourse to arms. On this account he had already separated from Ulrich von Hutten, who strove to instigate his friend Sickingen to an unseasonable and immature rising, and to excite the people to insurrection; it was therefore to be expected that he should oppose much more decisively a man like Münzer, who strove to kindle the fiercest flames of political and

religious fanaticism. In the opposition to him, a struggle originated for the existence or non-existence of the Reformation, for civilisation or barbarism, for spiritual Christianity or pharisaical Judaism, for freedom or anarchy, for the gentle blessings of religion, or the sanguinary horrors of a fanatical terrorism.

Before the inevitable results of this man's proceedings had become apparent, Luther had raised a warning voice in his "Letter to the Princes of Saxony against the Rebellious Spirit," 1524 (*Brief an die Fürsten von Sachsen vom aufrührerischem Geist*), against the agitator, who was at that time actively propagating his opinions at Allstedt, in the electorate of Saxony. "Satan being driven out from among us,—having wandered a year, or it may be three, in the wilderness,—hath at last made a nest for himself at Allstedt, and thinks to take advantage of the peace and protection we enjoy to fight against us. . . . . Now I rejoice in this, that our people do not begin similar practices; and they (*i. e.* Münzer and his followers) even boast that they do not belong to us, have learnt and received nothing from us, but are from heaven, and hear God himself speak to them as to the angels; and it appears (to them) but a poor thing that we at Wittenberg preach faith, love, and the cross of Christ. They say: Thou must hear God's voice thyself, feel and suffer his work in thee. The Scripture is naught to them, the Bible indeed a mere Babel (*ja Bibel,*

Bubel, Babel). . . . I have written this letter solely because I heard that *this spirit does not intend to stop at words, but to use his fists*, and resist the powers that be with violence. I thought it would come to this, that they intended to be lords of this world; although Christ denied this before Pilate, and said that his kingdom was not of this world. It behoves me, therefore, humbly to implore and caution your graces to look seriously to this matter, as in duty bound; to guard against this mischief by your lawful authority, and check this outbreak in the bud. For your graces are well aware that power and temporal dominion have been given and intrusted to you by God for the purpose of maintaining peace and punishing evil-doers. . . . . God will require you to answer for any negligence in using the sword he hath committed to you. . . . . If he would creep out of his hole and not shun the light, but stand boldly before his enemies and opponents, avow himself and make answer, we should then have some fruit wherewith to test this spirit. But this spirit at Allstedt avoids such a course, as the devil dreads the cross. . . . But what is this bold defiant spirit, that keeps himself so close, and will only stand before those *he does not fear?* What kind of spirit is this, who is afraid of two or three, and dare not show himself to those *he doth fear?* He smells a rat (*er riecht den Braten*). He hath had a rap once or twice in my presence, in my monastery

at Wittenberg; therefore he slinks away, and will appear only before his own people, who say 'yes' to all his fine speeches. . . . . I cannot boast of or presume upon such fine speeches; I am a poor miserable man, and have not managed my matters so cleverly, but have set about them with fear and trembling. . How humbly did I first assail the pope! how I wept and strove! . . . Nevertheless, I have in my humble spirit done that which this devouring lion hath not yet attempted. . . . . I have stood at Leipsic before the most formidable assembly; at Augsburg, before my fiercest foes; at Worms, before the emperor and all the empire. I have been obliged to contend in corners with one, two, or three; with whomsoever, where and howsoever they pleased;—*my poor timid spirit stood exposed like a flower of the field.*

"If necessary, I can make known what took place between me and this spirit in my own cell, that all the world may be able to judge that he is assuredly a lying devil. If they wish to show what spirit they are of, let them do it as it is fit, and let themselves be tried first, either by us or by the papists. For they esteem us—I thank God for it!—worse foes than the papists, although they profit by our victory, ... for which they have not striven nor risked their blood; but I have gained it at the peril of my life, nor have I hitherto flinched. . . . . But I know that we who have the Gospel—poor sinners as we are—possess the

true spirit, all the first-fruits of the spirit, although we have not yet the fulness thereof. We know, indeed, what faith, love, and the cross is; and there is no higher knowledge on earth than faith and love. By this we can know and judge which doctrine is true or false, conformable to the faith or not. So can we know and judge this lying spirit; because he intends to do away with the Scripture and the spoken word of God, and abolish the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; and would lead us to try God by our own will and works, and appoint time, place, and limit for his work in us.

"To sum up all, *let not your graces interfere with freedom of speech; do not fear to let them preach to their heart's content, how and against whom they please.* Sects there must be; and God's Word must take the field and conquer. If this is a true spirit, it will not fear us, and will keep its ground; but if ours is the true spirit, it will not fear them: *let the spirits confront each other and contend.* If in the meantime a few be seduced, well and good; it is the course of war; on the battle-field some must fall and some be wounded; the best fighter wins the day. *But if they want to go further than this war of words, if they want to use the fist, your graces must interfere and banish them the country, and say: Keep your fists to yourselves, for that is our office; or else get ye hence!* For we who are intrusted with God's Word should not fight with the

fist; ours is a spiritual strife, to win hearts and souls from the devil. To preach and suffer is our office; thus Christ and the apostles won souls with the Word of God. For they are not Christian who use their fists as well as the Word, and who are not rather prepared to endure all things."

In order to make the antagonism between Luther and Münzer more apparent, we will place the words of the revolutionist beside those of the reformer; reformation and revolution could not be represented in more startling contrast. With this view, we select a few of the strongest passages from Münzer's writings; for instance, his exhortation to an outbreak of the most violent and fanatic character, at once Judaical and communistic (1524):

"Behold, our lords and princes are the dregs of usurers, thieves, and robbers; 'they join house to house, lay field to field, till there be no place left, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.' (Isaiah v.) With all that, they proclaim among the poor God's commandment, saying, 'God hath commanded: Thou shalt not steal;' but they do not take it to themselves. And they so afflict all men, the poor husbandman and mechanic and all that live. 'They eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; they break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and their flesh as for the cauldron' (Micah iii.); yet they will hang up the people if

they take the least thing. To all this, 'Amen,' says Doctor Liar. It is the fault of the masters if the poor become their foes; they will not do away with the cause of the insurrection, and how can it turn out well in the long-run? If I say as much, I shall be accounted a rebel. So be it.

"Christ hath commanded this solemnly, saying, 'Bring hither those mine enemies, and slay them before me.' Wherefore? Wherefore, indeed! because they corrupted Christ's government, and wanted to defend their own knavery under the appearance of Christian faith, and scandalise the whole world with their cloak of hypocrisy. Do not talk nonsense to us — that the power of God will suffice without the help of your sword; if so, it may rust in the scabbard. Would to God that every learned man, be he who he may, would tell you the same! Christ hath said this plainly, in Matt. vii.: 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.'

"If they wish to be spiritual, and yet will take no account of the knowledge of God (Peter iii.), they must be put away (1 Cor. v.) I pray for them with pious Daniel, if they be not opposed to the revelation of God; but if they do oppose it, *let them be slain without mercy, as Hezekiah, Josiah, Cyrus, Elijah* (1 Kings xviii), *destroyed the priests of Baal; otherwise the Christian church will not return to its original state. The weeds must be rooted out of the vineyard of the Lord in the season of the harvest.*

"God hath said (Deuteronomy vii.), Thou shalt not show mercy on idolaters; destroy their altars, break down their images and burn them, that mine anger may not be kindled against you. But if it be said that the apostles have not destroyed the idols of the heathen, I answer, that St. Peter was a fearful man, and dissembled with the Gentiles. (Gal. ii.) We must extirpate the wicked and idle Christians, if the princes will not do it."

And he writes to the miners at Mansfeld (1525): "All Germany, France, and Italy are awake. The Lord will give chase, and the wicked must flee. Let us on them! let us on them! It is the time for the wicked to tremble like dogs. Stir up the brethren, that they may obtain peace, and recover their stolen testimony. This is highly necessary, necessary beyond measure. On them! on them!—have no mercy, though Esau use kind words (Genesis xxxiii.). Give no heed to the misery of the ungodly: they will entreat you so kindly; they will weep and wail like children; have no mercy, *as God hath commanded through Moses* (Deut. vii.), *and he hath revealed the same to us. Let not the blood grow cold upon your swords. Smite Nimrod, bang bang* (pinka pank) *upon the anvil; raze his tower to the ground.* As long as they live, you cannot be rid of the fear of man. We cannot speak to you of God *so long as they rule over you. On them! on them! on them! as long as it is day, God*

goeth before you: follow! You will find this history written in Matthew xxiv. Therefore be not alarmed; God is with you, as it is written (2 Chron. ii.), Thus saith God, Fear not ye, be not dismayed at this multitude; it is not your battle, but the Lord's.'"

In the same manner he wrote from Frankenhausen to Count Albrecht of Mansfeld:

"Written for the conversion of brother Albrecht of Mansfeld.'

"'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.' (Rom. ii.)

"I grieve that thou shouldst have misused Paul's epistle in such evil manner: thou thinkest to support the wicked government thereby to the uttermost, as the pope hath made hangmen (*Stockmeister*) of Peter and Paul. Thinkst thou that the Lord God, in his wrath, could not rouse up his people, void of understanding, to depose the tyrants? (Hos. xiii. 8.)

"Hath not the mother of Christ spoken of thee, and those like thee, through the Holy Ghost in prophecy? (Luke i.) 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree,' whom thou despisest. *Hast thou found in thy Lutherish porridge, and thy Wittenberg broth, what Ezekiel* (ch. xxxvii.) *prophesies?* Neither couldst thou taste in thy Martin's peasant-dirt what the same prophet saith (ch. xxxix.), that God bids all the birds in the air devour the flesh of princes, and that the senseless

beasts of the field shall drink the blood of the great multitude, as is described in Rev. xviii. 19? Knowest thou not that God careth more for his people than for you tyrants? Thou wilt be a heathen under the name of Christian and the cloak of Paul. But they will meet thee in thy way; so look out! If thou be ready to acknowledge (Dan. ix.) that the Lord hath given power to all Israel, and wilt appear before us and change thy faith, we will gladly agree to this, and receive thee as a brother; but if not, we shall take no account of thy lame and stale nonsense, but fight against thee as against the arch-enemy of Christendom. Give heed to this, and act accordingly.

"Given at Frankenhausen, Friday after Jubilate, anno 1525.

THOMAS MUNZER,
With the sword of Gideon."

Thus wrote the fanatic who had no better name for Luther than "the carnal, effeminate flesh at Wittenberg," "the prudish Babylonian woman," "arch-heathen," "Doctor Liar," "the Wittenberg pope," "hypocritical flatterer of princes," &c.

Luther had dreaded for several years that matters might come to this extremity. Even in his "Admonition to all Christians to beware of Insurrection and Rebellion" (1522), he says, "that it appeared as if the discovery of papal deceit and tyranny would lead

to an insurrection, during which priests, monks, bishops, with the whole clerical order, would run the risk of being turned out or killed; for the common people were determined not to bear any longer the injury to body, soul, and property, which had been inflicted on them hitherto; and they had good cause for an attack with flails and clubs, as our *Karsthans** threatened." Yet he entertains the hope that no general rising would take place, and carry the mass of the people along with it, because an end of the antichristian rule of the pope had been announced in Scripture, not through violence and insurrection, but through the Word of Christ. "For lying and deceit perish when once exposed; they need no other blow, but fall and vanish in ignominy of themselves." Supported by this conviction, he had not hitherto been persuaded to take the defensive against those who threatened with hand and flail, for he believed that *a general scramble* (Antasten) need not be feared. Still the people must be pacified, and be told to suppress even all desires and expressions that lead to rebellion, and undertake nothing against the powers that be; for what is done by orderly means cannot be considered rebellion: "for rebellion hath no common sense, and more, often injures the innocent than the guilty; therefore rebellion cannot be right, however just the cause; more injury than benefit is ever the

* Husbandman: derived from an agricultural implement. *Karst.*

result of it. Therefore respect authority as long as it does not tyrannise and oppress; but keep hand, and heart, and tongue still. . . . . "*I take, and always will take his part, who suffers from rebellion, however unjust his cause may be; and will set myself against him who rebels, let his cause be ever so just; because rebellion cannot take place without injury and the shedding of innocent blood.*"

But while cautioning the lower orders against rebellion, he was perfectly conscious that this was only one half of his task; with equal earnestness he admonished the princes, whose duty it was to suppress insurrection. To those who, under the pretext of obedience to the emperor, prevented the preaching of the Gospel, he said, with noble indignation: "Were the emperor to take from you castle or town, we should soon see how cunningly you would prove that you need not obey the emperor; but now, when you seek to grind down the poor man, and meddle audaciously with God's Word, you call it obedience to the emperor. Such persons were formerly called rogues: now we must term them obedient Christian princes. . . . Such are your princes that govern our German land: hence the wondrous prosperity throughout the country!"

He then draws the portrait of a true Christian prince: "A true Christian prince should assuredly divest himself of the idea of ruling by violence; for

cursed is his life who liveth and labours for himself alone; cursed all works that do not flow from love. A prince should exercise justice as firmly as he wields the sword; and let his reason determine when and where physical force should be applied, and with what degree of severity: so that reason should at all times govern law, and ever be the supreme authority. . . . . For when love directs the judgment, you can decide in all cases without your law-books; *but when you shut your eyes against the law of love and nature, your judgment will never please God*, even though ye had swallowed all the law-books in the world. . . . A righteous judgment should not and cannot be taken from books, but must be pronounced from free unfettered thought. But love and natural law,—the voice of reason itself,—ever utter such righteous judgment. From books we get nothing but laboured, doubtful judgments. . . . Therefore should written law be accounted below reason, from whence it flows as the fountain of justice; nor should we suffer *the fountain* to be confined to its narrow channel, nor reason to *the letter* of the law." Remarkable words these in the mouth of the German Reformer, which prove to us his true and lively perception of the insufficiency of mere formal law; and how clearly he recognised the desire of human nature to obtain for the inherent sentiment of justice its due weight by the side of the law as incorporated in codes —a desire which, among

all free nations, originates the demand for the public and oral administration of justice.

"A prince therefore," in Luther's opinion, "should not rely on codes or jurists, but on God alone; importune him, and pray to him for wisdom to govern his subjects well. I can lay down no law for a prince, but would only direct his heart how it should feel and decide in all matters of law and justice. . . . . Let him not think, Law and people are mine; I will do as I like with them;—but reflect thus: I belong to the law and the people; I must do what will be useful and good for them; I must not aim at tyrannical rule, but how I may peaceably direct and defend them. . . . Of this I am sure, that the Word of God will not bend and give way to princes, but princes must give way to it. It is enough for me to show that it is not impossible for a prince to be a Christian, although rare and difficult." Here we see already the great weight he attaches to the important truth, that princely functions are not mere private privileges (according to certain modern theories,) but involve, above all, a moral responsibility.

When the peasants' war, that movement so lamentable in its consequences, had overrun a great part of Germany, Luther still maintained the lofty position of Christian mediator and witness for the truth between prince and people. Raised above the fear of man, and never losing sight of eternal truth and

the divine judgments, he attacked both parties equally with the lightning vigour of his daring mind. In his "Exhortation to Peace, or the Twelve Articles of the Peasants' Charter in Swabia," he first represented, in a striking way, the importance and peril of this terrible crisis: "Should this rebellion proceed and get the upper hand, both kingdoms (the kingdom of God and of this world) must perish: neither temporal rule nor the Word of God would prevail, but endless convulsions throughout Germany would ensue. It is therefore necessary to speak and advise freely on the subject, without respect to persons."

He then addresses the rulers and princes: "In the first place, there is no one on earth we have to thank more than you for this mischief and insurrection, ye princes and rulers, especially ye blind bishops, mad priests, and monks, who cease not to rail and rage against the holy Gospel: moreover, in your temporal rule ye do nothing but plunder and oppress, to support your pomps and vanities, until the poor common people neither can nor ought to endure it any longer. The sword is at your throat: ye still think yourselves so firm in your saddles, that you cannot be unhorsed; this confidence and obstinate temerity will break your neck; you will see that. For be it known unto you, that God hath so ordered it, that your violence neither will nor ought to be borne with any longer. You must change, and submit to God's Word. If you

do not comply willingly and cheerfully, you will be forced to do it by violent and destructive means. If the peasants do it not, others must: and though you defeat them all, yet are they not defeated: God will raise up others; for he hath decreed your destruction, and he will destroy you. They are not peasants who oppose you; it is God himself who opposes you, to chastise your fury."

To those who threw upon his doctrine the blame of having caused this insurrection, Luther replied: "You, as well as every one, can testify that I have taught quietly, and exhorted all good subjects to obey even your tyrannical authorities; this insurrection, therefore, cannot be laid to my charge. But false prophets—as much my foes as yours—have got among the people; for three years they have gone in and out among them, and no one hath opposed them so stanchly as myself. If, then, God will now punish you, and has suffered the devil, by means of his false prophets, to stir up the distracted mob against you, what can I or my gospel do in the matter? . . . . And if I had a desire for vengeance, I might laugh in my sleeve and look on, or even join the peasants and help to make things worse; but God preserve me from that now as before!"

He further insists, that princes and rulers should accede to all reasonable demands: "The peasants have proposed twelve articles, among which there

are some so reasonable and just, that they leave you without excuse before God and the world. . . . . It is true they are nearly all intended to promote the interest of the peasants. . . . . I might bring other articles against you which concern Germany and government, as I have done in my book "To the German Nobility;" but as you have given these to the winds, you must now listen to and put up with articles of this selfish spirit. . . . . You cannot reject the first article, which claims for them the privilege of hearing the Gospel, and the right of electing their own pastors. . . . . Authority must not prevent a man from teaching and believing what he wishes, be it gospel or lie; it is enough to prevent the teaching of rebellion and disorder. The other articles, having reference to temporal burdens, are, of a truth, just and right; for authority hath not been instituted for its own profit and caprice, at the expense of the subject, but to do what it best can for the good of the subject. Now it is not possible to bear for long such plunder and oppression."

On the other hand, he urged this chiefly on the peasants: to keep a good conscience with regard to this matter; even if conquered, they would still be victorious, and save their souls; but in the other case, they would lose body and soul, even if they triumphed for a time and slew all the princes. "The most important point is, not how powerful you are, or

how much in the wrong others are; but how you may keep a conscience void of offence."

He now shows how that both human and divine laws forbid violent attempts at self-defence in the body politic; and proves, from the words of Christ and his apostles, that evangelical Christianity and political insurrection are incompatible: "As you boast of the name of Christians, you will assuredly bear with the denial of your Christian rights. Now listen, beloved Christians; thus saith your Lord and Master Christ, whose name you bear: *'But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.'*

"How do your projects agree with this law? Ye will not suffer wrong or injustice, but desire to be free; . . . . then put away the Christian name, and boast of another. . . . . In these texts a child may see what is true Christian right: not to resist wrong, not to draw the sword, not to defend or avenge oneself, but to resign body and goods, that he who robs may rob on: we have sufficient in our Lord, who will not forsake us. . . . To suffer and bear the cross is the Christian's privilege; this and no other. . . . . What doth Christ himself do when they crucify him?—he giveth himself up to Him who judgeth righteously,

and suffereth the unbearable wrong. Besides, he prayed for his persecutors: 'Father, forgive them.' .... *If you are true Christians, you must indeed do the same, and follow this example. If you do not, then renounce the Christian name and your boast of Christian privilege;* for then you are assuredly not Christians, but opposed to Christ and his law."

The entire weight of these remonstrances to the peasant-league rests, as we see, on the leading principle, that their appeal to the Gospel and to Christian right was wholly inadmissible in political questions, because true Christianity could never depart from its purely spiritual and inward nature; he, therefore, who would seriously invoke the sanction of Christianity could take no other way, amidst the pressure of the outer world, than that of utter self-denial, of calm trust in God, and submission to His righteousness. It was Luther's great object to preserve the spiritual character of the Reformation and of Christianity intact, uncorrupted, and unembarrassed by movements of an entirely opposite nature. Advancing in this direction, he must arrive at a conclusion, the immeasurable importance of which was known or fully appreciated neither by his own nor subsequent times; the conclusion, namely, that genuine Christianity, in the true original spirit of the Founder and Head of the church, was, upon the whole, only the business of a few, and that this

had never been otherwise: "Dear friends, the Christians are not so numerous, that so many could assemble in a crowd; a Christian is a rare bird. Would to God that the greater number of us were pious heathens even, who kept the natural law, to say nothing about Christian law." Have we not already in this thought, if we carry it out fearlessly, the germ of all those changes towards which the relation between church and state, religion and ecclesiastical establishments, national church and sects in modern times, more and more pointedly tend? It was therefore his proposition, to bring about peace, to reconcile these differences by means of impartial arbitration; to adjust by moral, not by physical, force the relation between the powers that be and the subject; and to purify and ennoble it more and more by the progressive influence of the spirit of the Gospel. "Not that I intend to justify or defend the intolerable injustice you endure from your governments (I admit their horrible injustice;) but this is what I desire: that if neither party will take advice, none of them can be called Christians; but let them, according to the course of this world, fight it out, and God punish one rogue by the other. Poor sinful man that I am, I know that I have a just cause when I fight for the Christian name, and pray it may not be disgraced.... Such comfort and confidence in praying ye cannot have; for conscience and Scripture prove that you

act like heathens, and not like Christians. I know also that none of you have called upon God in this matter; for ye dare not raise your eyes towards him, but set him at naught with your fists. But if ye were Christians, ye would cleave to 'our Father,' carry your cause to God in prayer, and say, 'thy will be done; deliver us from evil.' The true Christian way to be delivered from evil and misery, is patiently to endure and to cry to God. But as Christ hath no lot or part in either side, and nothing Christian is pending between you, and both nobles and peasants strive only for heathenish and worldly justice and temporal advantage, for God's sake be advised and set about it lawfully, and not with violence, that ye may not deluge Germany with blood. . . . . Ye nobles have history and Scripture against you, showing how tyrants are punished. . . . . Ye peasants also have both Scripture and experience against you, which prove that rebellion never prospers. . . . . If ye will not follow my advice, I give you up; but I am innocent of your blood—be it on your own heads! Ye nobles, fight not against Christians, but against public robbers, a disgrace to the Christian name; those among them who will be slain are already damned eternally. Again, ye peasants, fight not against Christ, but against tyrants, enemies of God and man, and against the murderers of Christ's saints; those of them who perish are likewise eternally damned.

This is God's assured sentence against you both. . . . . As for me and mine, we will entreat God that he may either reconcile and unite you, or mercifully frustrate your devices."

His hopes "that the strife might be appeased, if not altogether in a Christian spirit, yet according to human laws and treaties," were not to be realised, owing, as he had foreseen, equally to faults on both sides. The fearful tragedy of the "German peasant war" could not be averted; the German soil was saturated by the blood shed in a horrible civil war, the guilt of which rested equally on the brutality and lawlessness of the masses, as on the hardness of heart and treachery of several of the victorious governments.

When Luther received intelligence of the acts of violence committed by the peasants in more than one district, of the danger of an impending "terrorism" from the insurgent masses and their fanatical leaders, he abandoned the conciliatory course he had hitherto pursued, and directed the full measure of his wrath, the whole weight of his word and influence, against the insurrection, the immediate suppression of which he declared to be the first and most urgent duty of the governments. He did this principally in the pamphlet entitled, "Against the plundering murdering Peasantry" (May 1525).

"In my former writing," he says, "I would not

harshly judge the peasants, because they were willing to submit to justice and be better instructed. But before I had time to look round, they proceeded to blows, plundered and destroyed like mad dogs, showing plainly the devices of their false hearts. . . . . They are doing nought but the devil's work; and he especially is the arch-devil who reigns at Mühlhausen (Thomas Münzer,) and commits theft, murder, and bloodshed. . . . . Because, then, their deeds are different from their words, I must write of them in a different style, and instruct the conscience of the temporal power how to act."

Rebellion now appeared to him as the most fearful evil that could afflict a country; as the desolating strife of the elements, as fire and blood, against which extreme measures are not only permitted, but a sacred duty: "Rebellion is not ordinary murder, but conflagration, which fires and consumes a whole country. Therefore smite, slay, stab, secretly or openly, whoever can; and remember that there is nothing more venomous, pernicious, and devilish than a rebel. Slay him like a mad dog; if thou killest him not, he will kill thee, and a whole country with thee. A prince and governor must remember that he is God's deputy and the minister of His wrath, to whom the sword is intrusted to punish such villains. For if he can punish and doth not, he is guilty of all the murder and mischief which these villains commit.

This is no time for slumber, nor for patience or mercy; it is a time for the sword; a season of wrath, and not of grace. Therefore let the authorities advance with good courage, and smite home with a safe conscience, as long as the blood flows in their veins. . . . . They may appeal to God with all tranquillity of heart, and say: 'Lo, O God, thou hast appointed me to be a prince and ruler, and hast intrusted me with the sword to punish the evil-doer. (Rom. xiii.) Thou hast spoken, and cannot lie; therefore I must discharge my trust at peril of thy favour; it is manifest that these peasants in many ways have deserved death, before thee and the world. If it is thy will that I should perish by their hands, so be it, thy will be done; I shall die and perish in obedience to thy commandment and word.' . . . . Thus he who is slain in the cause of authority will be a true martyr before God, if he fight in this conviction, for he walks in the word of God, and obedience. On the contrary, he who falls in the cause of the peasants is a brand that will burn for ever in hell-fire, for he uses the sword against God's word and commandment. We live in such strange times, that a prince can serve God with blood-shed better than others with prayer. . . . . Therefore, my good lords, see to it that ye set free, save, help, and have mercy on those poor people (compelled by the peasants, against their will, to join their league;)

then stab, slay, and kill the rest, who can! If you perish in doing this, it will be well with you; a more blessed death you cannot die. You die in obeying God's command, and in the service of love; in saving your neighbour from the bonds of the devil. I pray you, then, let all who can, flee from the peasants as from the devil himself; but those who will not flee, I pray God to enlighten and convert them. As for those who cannot be converted, may they never prosper! To this let all true Christians say, Amen."

Luther most likely felt the reproaches to which he exposed himself by these violent expressions, for he concludes his address with the words: "If any one think this too severe, let him reflect that rebellion is not to be tolerated, and that the destruction of all temporal power may be expected every hour." This did not, however, prevent many of his contemporaries, Protestants and Catholics, from censuring, more or less loudly, this merciless rigour and cruelty; and the same reproach has been reiterated again and again, from that time to this. It is quite true that there is something in these inflammatory words repugnant alike to friends and enemies. They furnish another instance of that license and intemperance of expression, which he could never control when writing or speaking under the influence of strong emotion. An enemy might assert that the massacre of the peasants was urged by him with the same fanatical spirit with

which, a few centuries before, the infuriated Dominicans preached the extermination of the Albigenses. It is nevertheless an element in Luther's greatness, that he clings with such tenacity to the religious character of his task and vocation; and when this was menaced by the breaking-out of the insurrection, he evoked every energy for its suppression; he even invested this resistance with the sanctity of a divine and Christian act. Nor must we forget that the violent and apparently merciless spirit of his appeals for the suppression of the revolt by the sword must be looked upon, without doubt, as a direct reply to the cruel and incendiary addresses of Münzer and his associates. The most severe measures adopted by the authorities for the suppression of the revolt, when compared with the horrors of anarchy and the abominations of mob-rule, appeared to him as an actual blessing, a strong medicine, an inevitable though painful remedy.

The violent communistic (that is to say, despoiling) tendency which prevailed, partially and especially through Münzer, in the movement of the peasants, professedly resting on scriptural grounds, was also opposed by Luther with direct appeals to Scripture: "It is of no use for the peasants to assert, that in the 1st of Genesis all things are said to be created for the free and common use of all, and that we have all been baptised alike. For in the New Testament

Moses is of no account: there we find Christ is our master, who subjects us, body and goods, to the emperor and temporal authority, saying: 'Give unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.' Thus also St. Paul says to all baptised Christians: 'Let every one be subject to the powers that be.' Baptism only makes the soul free, not body and property. Neither doth the Gospel make our possessions common, except in the case of him who doth so of his own accord, like the apostles and disciples, who did not require that the property of strangers, such as Pilate and Herod, should be held in common, as our senseless peasants rave, but merely their own possessions. But our peasants will have a share in the goods of other people, and keep their own to themselves: clever Christians they! I think there are no more devils in hell; they have all entered into the peasants."

The sword of princes and rulers speedily subdued the insurrection, by the slaughter of the leaders and their misguided followers. Every act of cruelty and excess committed by the rebels was now avenged by the conquerors, in most places with double and treble cruelty and severity; so that Luther uttered again a cry of distress and indignation on hearing of it: "Alas, I have feared it! Had the peasants become masters, the devil would have been abbot; but now,

as these unchristian, bloodthirsty tyrants are again masters, the devil's mother will be abbess!"

When the insurrection was suppressed, Luther was able to return to the tranquil prosecution of his work. He was permitted to achieve what is rarely accomplished by the originator of a great movement,—namely, to check the revolution without giving up the reformation. It is true that his success in these critical moments must be attributed to his alliance with the temporal powers and to their assistance No leader of the French and English revolution succeeded in solving a similar problem: Mirabeau and Pym were snatched away by death before they even made an attempt to stem the revolutionary torrent, and Lafayette was crushed in the endeavour.

The maintaining of his principle was doubtless connected with the keenest sufferings of Luther's spirit. Had he not cause to reproach himself, in his retirement, with having contributed, by the intemperate, irascible, and inflammatory words of his earlier years, to this sanguinary result? Did he not see the future political condition of his country, and the progress of the Reformation, incalculably impeded and retarded by these revolutionary attempts? Was he not himself so materially changed in consequence of this struggle against the religious and political revolution, that a remarkable contrast is observable between the Luther of 1520 and 1525?

In the struggle against Rome he became conscious of the strength and depth of his opinions; in the struggle against the revolution he perceived their peril and limitation.

FOURTH SKETCH.

THE REFORMER AND HIS WORK.

THE great change which had taken place in the position of affairs during the eight years (1517–1525) which had elapsed since Luther's entrance on public life, will be clearly perceived if we consider for a moment the condition of his friends and enemies. From among the leaders in the work of civilisation who had principally promoted the great religious movement, one, Reuchlin, was now on the point of death; another, Hutten, had found a solitary grave as an exile on one of the islands of the Lake of Zurich; a third, the most influential of all, Erasmus, had abandoned the cause when it gave rise to violent commotion. Popular literature, at first so powerful an instrument in these changes, became in one direction a tool of the most destructive radicalism, and in another had already experienced the influence of Catholic re-action; while it is true the purest and best

LUTHER CONTINUES HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF MELANCHTHON. 1523–4.

organs of the time still adhered to the hero of Worms, whom Hans Sachs hailed as the "Wittenberg nightingale." Luther saw his emperor, the chief of the nation, in the toils of the Romanists, unable to appreciate the bent of the German mind and the spirit of the Reformation, and many German princes opposing the new doctrine with deadly enmity. He also saw the flower of the Franconian knights, who had espoused the cause of the Reformation, cut off and dispersed by the downfall of Sickingen; the peasantry, after a fatal insurrection, slaughtered by thousands; and the survivors more completely enslaved than before.

How complete the change since the time when hopes still existed that the whole nation would possibly follow with one accord the Gospel banner of freedom and love! Now, Luther could only rely on one or two reigning princes, on a circle of faithful friends, and on the stanch devoted heart of the people. Above all this, however, he trusted in the sanctity of his cause and the protection of God.

Hitherto we have endeavoured to survey the depth of his character and his abiding influence in three distinct ways: by considering the history of his gradual mental training up to his liberation from the shackles of popery; then in his struggle against the corruptions of the ancient church; and lastly, in his opposition to extreme innovation.

Our remaining task is to bring before the reader the leading features of the Protestant organisation as emanating from him; to portray himself in his ministerial and domestic relations; and conclude by tracing the result of his work in succeeding centuries.

LUTHER FOUNDER OF A NEW CHURCH.

To form a correct estimate of Luther as the founder of a new church, we must not lose sight of the fact that it formed in the first instance no part of his intention to become the originator of a new church.

The purification of the existing church from her corruption, her liberation from the tyranny under which she groaned, was Luther's grand principle in assailing the papacy: it made him the teacher of his nation.

The force of circumstances, and the imperious demands of the hour, compelled him, almost against his will, to devise measures of organisation, and to assist in laying the foundation of a new order of things in the more immediate sphere of his influence. In the beginning, however, nothing could have been farther from his thoughts than the design of becoming the head of a party, or the founder of the system which, in a more narrow and confined sense, has been denominated Lutheranism.

He protests against this with the strongest expressions in his "Admonitions" (1522): "*I beseech you, above all things, not to use my name; not to call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians.* What is Luther? The doctrine is not mine; I have been crucified for no one. Paul would not suffer the Christians to say: I am of Paul; or, I am of Peter; but, I am Christ's. How, then, can the followers of Christ call themselves after the unsanctified name of a poor stinking mass of corruption (*stinkender Madensack*), such as I am? *Let us blot out all party-names*, and call ourselves Christians, as we follow Christ's doctrine. The papists have justly a party-name; because, unsatisfied with Christ's name and doctrine, they will be popish too. Let them be called after the pope, their master. *I am and will be no man's master. In common with my brethren* (der Gemeine), *I hold the only universal* (einige gemeine) *doctrine of Christ, who alone is our master.*"

The irresistible progress of the religious movement proved to him unequivocally that a greater power was at work than that of a mere weak individual: "It is not our work that is now going on in the world; it is not possible that a human being could alone commence and carry on so great a scheme. It has, indeed, gone thus far without my thought and planning; it will be brought to a good end without my counsel, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

There is another who turns the wheel, whom the papists see not, but lay the blame on us." He then comprises in a few words the substance of what he considered at that time the legitimate working of the Reformation: "Obey the Gospel, and help others to do so; teach, write, and preach that human laws are nothing; prevent and dissuade any one from becoming a monk, priest, or nun; and let those who are in the cloister come out of it. Give no more money for bulls, tapers, bells, and churches; but maintain that a Christian life consists in faith and love. Persist in this for two years, and you will see what will become of pope, bishops, cardinals, priests, monks, nuns, masses, and the whole swarm of popish vermin (*Geschwürm und Gewürm.*) *It will vanish like smoke.*"

Thus we see his confidence in the power of the evangelical doctrine was so great, that he fully expected the mere promulgation and obeying it would suffice to dissipate as a vapour the papacy, with the entire Romish church, of which the pope was only the head; whose place pure Christianity, the life of faith and love, would then occupy. He regarded *faith* and *love* as the sum of evangelical Christianity, as he has already explained in his treatise "Of the Liberty of a Christian;" designating the essence of inward Christianity as faith, and the external active influence as love. We shall not therefore err, if we conclude that *a more profound and lively conception of*

faith and love appeared to him prominently at the outset as the essence of the Reformation. This was, consciously or unconsciously, the motive power of his entire life, giving sublimity to his vocation, and rendering imperishable the result of his mission as the reformer of Christendom, by the revival of true religion from her spiritual and original sources. These spiritual and original sources are nowhere to be found but in true faith and pure love.

But it was of incalculable importance that both should be understood and made effectual in a vivifying manner, and in the true spirit of the Gospel, as the life-giving principle of the new epoch, and of purified and liberated religion. *Luther and reformation gave the impulse which accomplished this; and the immortal merit of this achievement is the royal diadem which no subsequent age nor generation can pluck from Luther's brow.* But we do not hesitate one moment to express even now the conviction which pervades our whole account of his work, *that this impulse must not be confounded with a perfect religious system complete in itself.* At this point, indeed, Lutheranism and Calvinism, narrow, exclusive, and self-sufficient, separate from free and comprehensive evangelical Protestantism. The object sought by Luther and the Reformation, in its first movement, was the revival and regeneration of Christianity, by an earnest return to personal religion, and

by penetrating deeply into the ancient written sources of the religion of the Saviour of the world. Both paths led to the two fundamental principles of evangelical Protestantism (known in theological language as the *material* and *formal* principle of the Reformation:) *justification through faith alone; and the sole authority of the holy Scriptures as the true record of primitive Christianity.*

Both these principles are meant as a more accurate explanation and definition of that which Luther and the Reformation expressed by the word *faith;* a word which has created, down to our time, a whole sea of error, misinterpretations, and contradictions. The key to their true apprehension will be found in the opposite principles which they were originally intended to resist. The doctrine of justification by faith alone, stood opposed to the Romish notion of the necessity of good works to salvation,—works signifying certain exercises and penances prescribed by the church; while the doctrine of the sole and all-sufficient authority of the Scriptures was meant to overthrow the popish doctrine of the authority and necessity of tradition. In both these principles, the great results of Luther's religious experience are forcibly shown: they were essentially the product of his inward and outward struggle; the watchword of his liberation, and of the hostile position he assumed against Rome.

The grace of God and not our own merit, God's Word and not man's doctrine, was the salient point of this antagonism, as he then apprehended it, and as he subsequently, after a long interval, finally established it. The doctrine of justification by faith was in his view a complete denial of individual merit; conducing absolutely to the glorifying of God's grace, and to the blessed salvation of sinful men. It was the view of Augustine, based upon certain principles of the Apostle Paul, which governed him unconditionally in his conception of the relation between sin and redemption, God and man, the freedom and bondage of the human will, and impelled him to the most daring and stringent conclusions of his belief in predestination. He who has reached that stage in his knowledge of Christianity, from which he regards the Augustine view no longer as the highest and only valid exposition of the Gospel, but as one grand attempt, among others equally legitimate, to embody in human words and ideas the inconceivable and unfathomable mystery of divine love, will also perceive the necessity of a marked distinction in that fundamental doctrine of Luther and of the Reformation. The way and manner in which Luther gradually conceived this doctrine in his mind, how he adopted and expressed it, shows us (in a large sense) only the temporal and perishable shell in which the kernel of an imperishable religious principle was to

attain maturity: it was, to make use of an analogous figure, the tree girt about with thorns, the fruit of which was destined to supply present and future generations with delicious refreshment; and it is this fruit which aids Christianity in preserving its spiritual, life-giving power. For as long as this banner of Protestantism is reared on high, the most profound and essential truth of the Christian religion can never, for any length of time, be misconceived or lost: *that* truth, that the awful abyss between the Creator and the creature, between God and man, can only be bridged over by the mystery of grace, that is, free and saving love; and that its trustful reception and appropriation (consequently the conversion, salvation, and blessedness of man) takes place in the inward sanctuary of the human soul, and is therefore a work of faith, depending on nothing external. With this truth, the religion of the heart, — the deep, unconquerable, and ever-renovating character of Christianity, —stands or falls; in this sense the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith remains an imperishable bulwark of the Gospel.

We may accept these essential and fundamental points of Protestantism fully and with absolute and steadfast conviction, and nevertheless reject, clearly and decidedly, the assumptions, the dogmatic and scholastic formulæ and deductions, with which Luther has invested this true and fundamental principle.

Every one who has the courage and ability to draw his faith directly from a serious study of the Scriptures, and from individual experience in a truly evangelical and Protestant sense, will be compelled to assert this right with reference to nearly all the principal points of Luther's doctrine, rather than submit to scholastic formulæ prepared by one party or the other for his unconditional acceptance. Indeed, Luther's mind itself vacillated incessantly on the immovable pivot of a few leading maxims; his convictions varying in form and tenour, as he was tossed to and fro in the struggle, driven by this party or by that, by the superstition, scepticism, or fanaticism of his opponents.

Luther's position with reference to the authority of the Scriptures was exactly similar. His trust in it was so unimpeachable, that faith in the divine origin of the Bible became as an unquestionable fact, the dominant idea of his whole remaining life. Still his reliance on the Scriptures was, without doubt, influenced by the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith, so that the sum-total of Christianity appeared to him to be contained in the leading truth which he simply designated the "Gospel," in respect to which the remaining topics of the Scriptures were frequently thrust into the background. "Christian faith," he asserts, "is the belief that man is justified and saved without works; and so resigns himself, and

all he can do, as to rely on the merits of Christ alone. I stand not alone in this; I am not the only one, not even the first, who hath said, faith alone justifieth: Ambrose hath said it before me, also Augustine, and many others; and *whoever can read and understand St. Paul must say the same, and not otherwise, for his words are so strong, and admit of no works.*" So assured was he that St. Paul's doctrine of justification through faith, that glorious keystone of Christianity, was in fact the essence of the Gospel, that he ventured—solely to give more decided prominence to this fundamental principle—on the hazardous and unwarrantable step of an arbitrary addition, in harmony, it is true, with the spirit and connexion of the original. It is well known that he ventured on the introduction of the word "*allein*" (alone) in Romans iii. 28, which is not found in the original Greek: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith (alone), without the deeds of the law." He defended himself against the reproaches to which this liberty taken with the text justly exposed him, in a manner coarse and defiant, but by no means satisfactory. "Therefore shall it remain in my New Testament; and though it drive your popish asses wild, they shall not make me leave it out." Among the reasons he assigns for this act of daring are, independent of the peculiar case and the character of the German language, also the example of the fathers,

and the peril of the people: "They would rely on works, and be wanting in faith, and so lose Christ; especially in these times, when they have so long been accustomed to works."

He applied this rule not only to single passages, but to measure the value and importance of entire books of the New Testament, and made it at times an absolute canon of scriptural criticism: "You must," he said, "judge fairly of all the books (of the Bible), and decide which are the best: for instance, the gospel of St. John and the epistles of Paul, especially that to the Romans, and the first epistle of Peter, are *the pith and marrow of all the books;* they ought, indeed, to be the first; and I would advise every Christian to read them first and most often, and make them, by daily study, as familiar as daily bread. For in these thou findest but few works and miracles of Christ recorded; but thou findest described in a masterly way, *how faith in Christ conquers sin, death, and hell, and giveth life, righteousness, and salvation—which is the true nature of the Gospel.* For if I must do either without the works or the teaching of Christ, I would rather be without the works than without any portion of the preaching: the works do not help me, but his words; *they* give life as He himself. Now as John hath recorded few of Christ's works, but much of his preaching; the three other evangelists, on the contrary, many of his works (?), few

of his words,—the gospel of John is the only living true heart-gospel — to be preferred before, and estimated more highly, than the other three. In the same way, the epistles of Paul and Peter excel the three gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In fine, the gospel of John and the epistles of Paul, especially those to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, also the first epistle of Peter, — *these are the books which show thee Christ, and teach all that it is necessary to know for thy salvation, even wert thou never to see or hear any other book or doctrine.* In the same way, the epistle of James is truly one of straw; for, indeed, it hath nothing evangelical about it. In this one thing all the truly sacred books agree: they all of them preach Christ, and set him forth. *This is the true touchstone by which to judge books—whether they set forth Christ or not;* since all Scripture exhibits Christ, and will know nothing but Christ. *Whatsoever doth not teach Christ is not apostolic, though Peter or Paul taught it;* on the other hand, whatsoever teacheth Christ is apostolical, although it were the work of Judas, Annas, or Herod."

He asserts this principle of the boldest, and at the same time most dogmatic criticism, with a daring and candour before which the idolatrous adherence of later Protestant divines to the letter of the Scriptures would recoil: "The epistle to the Hebrews appears to me composed of many pieces; but it speaks in a

thorough, masterly way of the priesthood of Christ, and expounds the Old Testament fully and with precision; so that it is plainly the work of a man of sound learning, experienced in the faith, and conversant with the Scriptures, a disciple of the apostles, and who learnt much from them. And although he does not lay the foundation of faith, which is the function of the apostles, yet he buildeth thereon gold, silver, and precious stones. Therefore must we not take offence if wood, straw, or hay be mingled with it, but ought to receive such good doctrine in all honour; only we must not place it on a level with the apostolic epistles. The epistle of James I do not consider as the writing of an apostle at all, for these reasons: first, that it ascribes justification to works, in direct contradiction to Paul and all the other sacred writers; secondly, that it undertakes to teach others, and yet, in all this long teaching, doth not once allude to the sufferings, resurrection, and spirit of Christ. He mentions Christ several times, yet teacheth nothing about him, but only speaks of faith in God generally. Now the function of a true apostle is to preach Christ's sufferings, resurrection, and office, and to lay the foundation of faith in the same. But this James enjoins only the law and works, and so confuses the one with the other, that it appears to me as if some good pious man had caught a few sayings from the disciples of the apostles, and had

committed them to paper; or it is possibly written by another from his preaching. To sum up, he wishes to oppose those who rely on faith without works; and proving too weak for his task, he attempts to enforce by the law what the apostles effect by the drawings of love. I cannot, therefore, place this epistle among the really chief books, but will prevent no one from judging of it as he pleases, for many good texts are to be found therein. The epistle of Jude, as an extract or copy of the second epistle of Peter, need not be accounted one of the leading books. With respect to the Revelation of John, let every one follow his own opinion; I state what I feel. For more than one reason, I cannot deem this book either apostolic or prophetic. First and foremost, the apostles do not report visions, but prophesy in plain simple words; for it behoveth the apostolic function to speak of Christ and his works without figure or vision. No prophet of the Old Testament, to say nothing of the New, hath dealt so much in visions; so that I almost esteem it like the fourth book of Ezra, and can most assuredly find in it no trace of the Holy Spirit. Let every man entertain his own opinion with respect to it; my mind cannot away with the book; and it is sufficient reason for me not to esteem it highly, that Christ is neither taught nor known in it. Therefore I abide by the books which show me Christ clearly and purely."

It will be evident to every one familiar with the subject, that we quote these passages merely as illustrating Luther's individual sentiments, and by no means to favour a new authority in matters of faith based upon his word. Whoever seeks to obtain an independent and thorough comprehension of divine revelation in the Scripture will heartily adopt the profound words of Luther, that all the holy Scriptures *interpret themselves* by the connection and comparison of separate passages and books, without looking to Rome. We attach, however, great importance to these expressions of the reformer, because they prove that the principle of Protestantism had even at that time occasionally reached in Luther's mind a point from which it timidly receded subsequently for several centuries, until the struggles and labours of more modern times rendered a return to it, and to the solution of the problem connected with it, imperative. These sentiments of Luther exhibit with equal distinctness the individual and highly-coloured character of his religious life, and of his personal development and experience. But this individual standard will not always suffice rightly to estimate the manifold ways of God, which, from very different premises than his, conduct as certainly to truth and life. However much our conception of individual points may differ from his, the decisive fact still remains in its full importance, that Luther, by asserting and main-

taining the two great principles of the Reformation, —justification by faith, and the authority of the holy Scriptures, — opened to the Christian spirit a new career of knowledge, development, and freedom for centuries to come.

It was assuredly not in accordance with Luther's nature, to undertake, of his own choice and without the pressure of necessity, the systematic organisation of the new doctrine; a task much better adapted to Melanchthon's character, who indeed took the first step towards it, until Calvin afterwards rendered the most effective service in this direction. Luther's greatness and power did not consist in rounding off a system, but rather in working out and contending for fundamental truths, in giving body to a principle conceived by him; he being ever essentially influenced and determined by the warfare of antagonistic principles.

Many urgent motives combined at the earliest period of the Reformation, to render the embodying of the details of the new doctrine into a definite confession of faith absolutely necessary; for at every public conference respecting these changes, the want of a clear and firm assertion of the newly-acquired position against the Romish church, as well as against extreme radical tendencies, made itself painfully perceptible. The first formal confession of the reformed faith was therefore, in essentials, the result of the

immediately preceding struggle against Rome, against the political and religious revolution, and against the dissentient views respecting the sacrament of the Lord's supper. In this sense, the Augsburg Confession gave to the Reformation its provisional form in doctrinal matters. With this celebrated diet at Augsburg—thirteen years after Luther's theses had sounded the alarm—the great moment arrived when a number of German princes and towns professed publicly and solemnly, before emperor and people, the evangelical principles of the Reformation, and thereby declared their recognition by the law of the land. In the preceding year (April 9th, 1529) those who held the same religious opinions had formed themselves into the "Protestant party" at the diet at Spires by their "protestation" against the conclusions of the Catholic majority. In that collective protestation we hear a noble echo of the individual protestation of a single conscience, which Luther alone had made at Worms (1521). As, however, that protestation proceeded only from a minority of the German states at the diet, the hope (which Luther entertained as late as 1522) that the Reformation would become the cause of all Germany, had vanished, and the separation of the German nation at its religious root was all but decided.

As in the doctrine, so in the worship and constitution of the new church, Luther proceeded slowly,

step by step, as the necessity of the moment and the progress of the people permitted; in all cases he endeavoured to fall in with existing institutions, purifying and improving them,—rather to become the reformer of the ancient than the founder of an entirely new church.

In the preface to Melanchthon's "Instruction for the Visitors to the Clergy in the Electorate of Saxony," he expressly stated, "that it was not intended by this to make new laws and decrees, but only *a history and confession of our faith, until God the Holy Ghost give something better.*" He protects himself in the same manner, in the pamphlet, "German Mass and Order of Divine Service" (1526), most carefully from the suspicion that he wished to become the clerical legislator of Protestant Germany: "Above all things, I affectionately beseech those who observe or follow our order of public worship, not to consider it as an indispensable law, nor as a means to mislead or entrap the conscience of any one thereby, but to use it in Christian liberty, how, when, where, and how long it may be fit and required by circumstances. It is not my opinion that all Germany should adopt our Wittenberg order." But he forgot in these regulations, which he yet described so unequivocally as *preliminary* and *provisional*, to specify how and by whom, and under what forms, future changes should be introduced. This omission

was caused by the uncertain and unprepared attitude in which Luther stood to the whole question of church-government, for which indeed he felt no vocation. Impelled by the circumstances of the moment, he took provisional measures, which at a subsequent period were made, partially at least, absolute; and left the new church eventually in a condition rather resembling the scaffolding made for the erection of a building than the edifice itself.

True to the spiritual character of his religious sentiments, he regarded the externals of religion, all that relates to worship and the constitution of the church, not as a vital question, but as a matter of *education* and progressive culture, to bring those as yet spiritual babes, who were still in bondage, to spiritual maturity and freedom. "*Since there is nothing in these external ordinances that concerns our conscience before God*, and they may yet be useful to our neighbour, we ought to consider them in the spirit of love, to cause us all to be of one mind, to act in the same manner; even as all Christians have one baptism, one sacrament, and to none is any special one given by God. To sum up, we do not establish these forms for the sake of those who are already Christians,—they do not need any of these things, they worship God in the spirit; but for the sake of those such ordinances are necessary, who are yet to become Christians, or strengthened in the

faith: just as a Christian needs not baptism, the word, and the sacrament, as a Christian (for he has all things already,) but as a sinner. Above all, these ordinances are necessary for the ignorant and the young, who ought to and must be brought up and exercised daily in the Scriptures. For their sake we must read, sing, pray, preach, write, and compose hymns; and if it would tend to their good, I would gladly have all the bells ring, all the organs pipe, and everything else make music that can. It is in this that popish worship is so objectionable, that a work and a merit is made of it, instead of its being employed for the instruction of the young and ignorant by exercising them in the Scriptures and the word of God.

As he distinguished here so plainly between those who were already Christians, and others who were to become so, he arrived necessarily at the conclusion, that different forms of divine service are required, besides the general form, for these different degrees of Christian knowledge, because those far advanced and matured in faith and knowledge might put forth their claim for the due supply of their spiritual wants in the worship and constitution of the church. Indeed, he enters upon the consideration of this subject without any reserve, and thus recognises a pressing and spiritual claim which has scarcely ever, and at no time satisfactorily, been met by the Protes-

tant churches, and which, for that reason, has often asserted its right in a morbid, extravagant, and fantastic manner. Luther accordingly introduces three different grades of divine service; first, the *Latin mass* (purified in the spirit of the Gospel,) the frequent use of which he desired to retain especially for the sake of the young: "For I by no means wish to dispense with the use of the Latin language in divine service. I do not agree with those who confine themselves to one language; for I am anxious to educate such youths and adults who may be useful to Christ in foreign countries also, and converse with the people." The second form of worship proposed by him is the *German mass*, "for the sake of the ignorant laity." Both modes of worship, the Latin and the German mass, are to suit the requirements of a national church, or a church for the people, as a "public attraction to Christian faith" for those great miscellaneous assemblies, "among whom there are many who do not yet believe, nor are Christians, but most of them stand by and gape for something new, as if we were celebrating divine worship in the open air among Turks or infidels." From these modes of worship he distinguished, in the most marked manner, "*the third kind, which is the true manner of evangelical ordinances*," under which class he comprehended, if we may so speak, the intimate communion of the esoteric church, the evangelical priesthood of

all true Christians, mature in faith and love, which was intended to take the place of the hierarchy of the Romish priesthood. The special worship of this more exclusive religious communion (Spener's *ecclesiola in ecclesia*) should, in Luther's opinion, "not take place so publicly among all sorts of people; but those who are serious Christians, and ready to confess the gospel with hand and mouth, should inscribe their names and assemble together in some private house for prayer, reading, and baptism, to receive the sacrament, and perform other Christian works." Within this circle he advised the introduction of a church-discipline and care of the poor: "Here baptism and the sacrament might be dealt with briefly but decorously, and attention be devoted principally to the word, to prayer, and to labours of love."

This was, alas, but an idea thrown in the lap of time; he did not consider those more immediately around him, his German contemporaries as a whole, sufficiently prepared for such a measure: "I can and may not yet establish and regulate such a community or assembly, for I have not yet the necessary persons, nor do I see that many desire it;" therefore he would confine himself to the two first grades of divine service, in addition to preaching, until he could with a good conscience introduce also the third order, when, on some future day, true and earnest Christians might unite for that object and require it of

him. If he were not to wait for that time, but seek to carry out his project by himself, he feared that it might lead to "disturbances (rebellion, schism, and sectarianism;) *for we Germans are a rude, mad, and crazy folk, with whom it is not easy to undertake any thing*, unless strict necessity drive us to it."

The lingering effects of his previous contests with the "enthusiastic and rebellious spirits," *i. e.* the radicals and fanatics, had evidently diminished his earlier confidence of success and reliance on the genius of his nation; so that he wanted courage to complete the evangelical church in her more noble organism, presuming (which is doubtful) that he was not originally deficient in the gifts necessary for this work of organisation. It was doubtless also this same state of mind which aroused in Luther—as opposing the progress of radicalism—a feeling of closer relationship to the old Christian elements of the Roman Catholic church, in consequence of which he brought forward, more prominently than heretofore, principles common to the Catholic and to the evangelical church. He says, for instance, in his treatise on Anabaptism (*Wiedertaufe*, Feb. 1528,) in refutation of those who would not admit infant baptism because the pope did: "If so, they must deny also the holy Scriptures and preaching, for all this we have in common with the pope; we must also give up the Old Testament, that we may take nothing from the unbelieving Jews

either. We admit that there is much Christian good in the papacy, nay all Christian good, and hath from thence come to us: namely, we acknowledge that in the papacy is found the true holy Scripture, the true baptism, the true sacrament (*Sacrament des Altars*,) the true key to the forgiveness of sins, true preaching of the Gospel, the true catechism. I say unto you, that true Christendom is under the pope, yea the quintessence of Christendom, and many great pious saints. If Christendom be under the pope, then it must truly be the body and member of Christ; if it is his body, it must have the true spirit, Gospel, faith, baptism, sacrament, key, preaching, prayer, holy Scripture, and all that Christendom should have. We do not rant like the fanatics, and reject all connected with the pope; else we should also reject Christendom, the temple of God, and all that is derived from Christ. On the contrary, we fight against and reject *this*, that the pope will not suffer Christendom to rest contented with such good, inherited from the apostles, but will join his devilish additions thereto; and doth not use such good for the advantage of God's temple, but for its destruction, compelling men to value his commands and ordinances more than Christ's. Beloved, it behoveth us not so fiercely to rail against the pope, because the saints of Christ are subject to him: a cautious and modest spirit is needed, leaving to him what belongs to God's temple, and to guard

against his additions by which he destroys the temple of God."

In these moderate expressions we no longer recognise the wrath of the Elias of 1520, but the sobriety of the Reformer, matured and tried by the storms of time. And ought we not to look upon such expressions as a consolatory prophecy of a time to come, in which bitter strife, and the blind and persecuting spirit of party, between the living members of the divided Christian church, will be appeased, so that due honour may be given to the religion of the Redeemer by a more elevated union in the eternal principles of truth?

The attentive reader will be enabled to form a tolerably correct idea, from the above account of the personal character of the great reformer, without our describing his peculiarities more in detail. His spiritual development, his public career, his words and deeds, are the most decided and indelible traits in the portraiture of Luther's character. We confine ourselves, therefore, in our remaining observations, to supplementary suggestions, for the purpose of giving the reader a more complete impression of his character in one or two distinct aspects.

We review with astonishment and admiration the range of his indefatigable activity, the extraordinary

degree of his influence as *teacher*, *priest*, and *head of his church*.

It is but seldom that a man becomes, in so comprehensive and sublime a sense as Luther, the teacher of his nation. By means of a translation unequalled in its kind, and an oral and written exposition full of intelligence and power, breathing the noblest and most profound nationality, he brought the book most essential to the religious culture of man nearer to the understanding and the heart of his nation; the meanest of the people were thus enabled to draw the richest nourishment for heart and mind directly from the ancient written sources of our religion. The merit of this service alone places him among the greatest benefactors of his race. And how creative and heartfelt his eloquence, remarkable both for childlike purity and manly courage! If it is true that the spiritual individuality of man is revealed in his style, what a brilliant light do Luther's writings shed upon him! One of the greatest judges of the German language speaks of him thus: "Luther's language must be considered, both on account of its noble and almost miraculous purity and its great impressiveness, as the germ and foundation of modern high-German diction, but slightly departed from even in our day, and then, in most cases, to the loss of its expressive power. The modern high-German (*neu hochdeutsch*) may, in fact, be termed the dialect of Protestantism; and the

LUTHER SINGING AT HOME - INTRODUCTION OF THE GERMAN CHURCH HYMNS AND CHANTS.

spirit of freedom which it breathes has long since, unknown to themselves, captivated the writers and poets of the Catholic faith. . . . We are indebted to Luther more than to any one, for reviving and fostering the body and spirit of our language, and even for the beauties of modern German poetry."

And we find the same man whom we admire as the translator, expounder, and preacher of God's Word, giving the tone as the spiritual poet of the Reformation, and by his hymns becoming the originator of that beautiful blossom of German Protestantism, psalmody. It is impossible to speak of his merit with reference to German psalmody without making mention of his exquisite hymn of triumph, which he most likely composed in the year of the protestation at Spires (1529). Wherever an attempt is made to represent and to appreciate Luther, this noble poem, in which his heroic spirit unintentionally shines forth in inimitable and ideal grandeur, must find a place.

Luther's Hymn.

Ein feſter Burg iſt unſer Gott,
Ein gute Wehr und Waffen;
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Noth,
Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.
Der alte böſe Feind
Mit Ernſt er's jetzt meint,

Groß Macht und viel List
Sein grausam Rüstung ist;
Auf Erd'n ist nicht sein's Gleichen.

Mit unsrer Macht nichts gethan,
Wir sind gar bald verloren;
Es streit't für uns der rechte Mann,
Den Gott selbst hat erkoren.
Fragst du wer der ist?
Er heißt Jesus Christ,
Der Herre Zebaoth,
Und ist kein andrer Gott;
Das Feld muß er behalten.

Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär,
Und wollt'n uns gar verschlingen,
So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr;
Es muß uns doch gelingen.
Der Fürste dieser Welt,
Wie sau'r er sich stellt,
That er uns doch nichts,
Das macht, er ist gericht't,
Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.

Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn,
Und kein'n Dank dazu haben;
Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan,
Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.
Nehmen sie uns den Leib,
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib,
Laß fahren dahin!
Sie haben's kein Gewinn;
Das Reich muß uns doch bleiben.

TRANSLATION.

Our God is a strong tower,
A sure defence and weapon;
He aids in every hour,
Whate'er distress may happen.
The old and evil foe
Striveth to bring us low,
Great in his craft and might,
Full armèd for the fight;
On earth none can him liken.

Our feeble might achieveth nought,
We soon are lost and undone;
By Him alone the work is wrought
Whom God himself hath chosen.
Dost thou ask the name?
Christ Jesus is the same,
The Lord of Sabaoth:
There is no other God;
'Tis He the field hath taken.

And were the world of devils full,
All threatening to devour us,
We fear not; true and dutiful,
They cannot overpower us.
Prince of this world in vain
Round us his darts may rain,
He no harm can do;
His arts must perish too;
A little word can slay him.

That Word of his shall sure remain,
And still no thanks be theirs;
He's with us on the battle-plain,
His spirit and his gifts are ours.
Perish our poor estate,
Wife — children — by their hate,
On them be the sin;
Nought from us can they win,
His kingdom must be ours!

We have styled him above the teacher of his nation; and this name is also singularly applicable to his unwearied efforts in word and deed for the religious and scientific culture of the young; his Little and Great Catechism became the guide of millions to the knowledge of the principles of Christianity. He readily seized every opportunity of appealing to the hearts and consciences of the nation for the foundation of new, and the maintaining and extending of existing schools. Thus in his "Address to his Burgomasters and Councillors of all German Cities to establish and uphold Christian Schools" (1524), and in the sermon "On the Duty of Sending Children to School" (1530), he says: "If we wish to give the devil a blow and to hit him very hard, we must do it through the young people brought up in the knowledge of God to spread abroad his word. . . . . *One* true Christian is better, and can do more good, than all men on earth can do harm. And for what other

reason do we old people live, but to minister to and bring up the young? God hath intrusted them to us, and will call us to a strict account concerning them. Children are born daily, and grow up among us, and there is, alas, no one who takes their part and directs them; we let things take their own course. The monasteries and foundations ought to do it; but these are they of whom Christ says: 'Woe unto the world because of offences!' . . . . Therefore it behoveth the council and the authorities to bestow the greatest care and attention upon the young: for it is the chief prosperity, glory, and power of a city, to possess many learned, sensible, honourable, well-educated citizens, who may afterwards be able to gather wealth and make good use of it.

"And let us not forget that we shall not be able to preserve the Gospel without the (dead) languages. Languages are the scabbard of the sword of the Spirit; they are the caskets in which we bear this treasure. For as the Gospel hath come alone through the Holy Ghost and still cometh, yet it came through the medium of the languages, and must be retained thereby. Soon after the apostolic age, when the languages ceased, the Gospel, faith, and Christianity fell away more and more, until they wholly vanished under the popes. Now, when languages have revived, they bring such light with them, that all the world must admit we have the Gospel as pure

and entire as the apostles, and, indeed, in greater purity than in the days of Jerome and Augustine. . . For the fathers themselves are often at fault; and because they were ignorant of the languages, they seldom agree. . . . . St. Bernard was a man of so powerful a mind, that I can almost place him above all other teachers; but behold how often he trifles with the Scriptures (spiritually) and misinterprets them! Since it behoveth Christians to be skilled in the holy Scriptures, their special and only book, it is a sin and shame not to know the word of our God, and a still greater sin and shame not to learn the languages; since God hath given us both people and books, and desireth his books to be open to all. . . . . Let us not be confounded if a few boast of the spirit, and disparage the Scripture. . . . . Spirit here or spirit there! I have also been in the spirit, and have also seen spirits. But this I know well, how little the spirit doth all alone. I should have been far enough astray, had not the languages helped me, and made me sure and safe respecting the Scriptures. I might have been, indeed, pious, and preached in quiet, but must have let the pope and the sophists, and the whole rabble of Antichrist, remain what they were. The Scriptures and the languages make the world too hot to hold the devil.

"And even if there were no soul, no heaven or hell, and schools and languages were not wanted for

the knowledge of God and of the Scriptures, this would be still a sufficient reason for establishing schools for boys and girls in every place, that the world needs clever men and women for its temporal well-being. As far as I am concerned (1524), if I had any children, I would have them study not only languages and histories (*Geschichten*), but also music and the whole science of mathematics. How much do I now regret that I have not read more *poets and histories*, and instead have been compelled to read that devil's filth, the philosophers and sophists, with great toil, expense, and damage! I have since had enough to do to get rid of it. And if I were obliged to resign my post as preacher (1530), I should prefer no office before that of schoolmaster or teacher of boys; for I know that after preaching, this work is the most useful and the greatest and best. Beloved, we must regard it as the greatest virtue on earth, to educate other people's children, which few do by their own."

Luther was not only the teacher of his nation, but he had at the same time the true nature of a priest; for he loved his people with holy earnestness, and he often wrestled near unto death to obtain an assurance of the validity of his vocation. Already inclined to the melancholy which is common in thoughtful and poetic natures, by education and bodily and mental peculiarities, his position exposed him to inward and outward conflicts, to frequent wrestling with the most

oppressive states of mind, which at times rose to the highest degree of bodily and mental anguish. We have an account of one of these attacks of spiritual distress, from the pen of his friends Bugenhagen and Justus Jonas, as recent as 1527: "On Saturday, the 9th of July, our beloved father, Martin Luther, had one of those dreadful attacks, the like of which we read of in the Psalms. He has indeed often before experienced such conflicts, but never such a violent one as this; as he admitted on the following day, that it had been much more severe and dangerous than the bodily weakness which seized him on the evening of the same day. As soon as this spiritual temptation was over, the pious Job, fearing that if the hand of God should fall upon him again so severely, he would not be able to endure it, sent his servant Wolf, desiring me to come to him with all speed. When we went up to him, and retired into a private place, he commended himself and all he had with great earnestness to God, began to confess and acknowledge his sins; and the master sought consolation from his disciple out of God's Word, *i. e.* absolution and remission of sins, and besought me to pray for him diligently. He further requested that I would allow him to receive the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ on the following Sunday, for he hoped to preach on that day. . . . When he had confessed and spoken of the spiritual assault he had borne that

morning, with such fear and trembling that he could scarcely describe it, he continued, 'Many think, because I sometimes appear cheerful in my walk and conversation, that my path is strewn with roses; but God knoweth how it is with me in regard to life. I have often intended, for the sake of the world, to appear (that is to say, act) somewhat more serious and holy; but God hath not given me the power to do so. The world can find—I thank God for it—no vice in me, nevertheless it taketh offence at me.'" On the evening of the same day, when a violent fit of illness followed the mental anguish of the morning, he made a formal confession, in the presence of his friends Bugenhagen and Jonas, to the effect, that the oppression of spirit which had overtaken him that morning did no ways arise from any doubt of the truth of his doctrine: "As the world taketh delight in lying, many will say that I recanted my doctrine at the last. I therefore earnestly beseech you to witness my confession of faith. I say with a good conscience, that I have taught God's Word faithfully as he hath commanded, and to which I was drawn and compelled without any will of my own. Yea, I have truly and savingly taught faith, love, the cross, the sacraments, and other articles of Christian doctrine. Many accuse me of being too severe and violent in writing against the papists and rebels (*Rottengeister*). Yes, I have indeed hit my enemies hard, but I have never repented

of it; whether violent or moderate, I have never sought to injure any one, still less ruin his soul, but have rather sought the advantage and salvatiou of my foes."

One of the principal sources of the discontent and dejection which overpowered him in the later years of his life, more and more frequently, is certainly to be sought in the fact, that the Reformation had not produced all the moral fruit he expected from it.

It was a grievous disappointment, which kept festering like an open wound through all the later years of his life, that all those whom he had liberated from the Romish yoke, by proclaiming the liberty of the Gospel, had not proved themselves worthy of that liberation by the purity of their conversation and conduct, and by deeds of love; that many, on the contrary, had dishonoured the liberty obtained at so great a sacrifice, by hardened indifference and the coarsest licentiousness. This experience drew from him the bitterest expressions, a few of which only we will quote. "*Sodom and Gomorrah*," he wrote in 1530, "*were never one-tenth part so wicked as Germany is now*, for they had not God's Word and preaching. We, on the contrary, have it in vain; and we act as if we wished that God and his Word, that decency and honour, should perish. If such things are to be done in German lands, woe is me that I was born in Germany, or ever learnt, spoke, and wrote German.

And if I could do it according to my conscience, I would rather advise and assist to bring back the rule of the pope and all his enormities. Formerly all purses were open, and there were no bounds to giving; but now, when we want to establish or maintain proper schools and churches, all your purses have padlocks. I pray God for a happy death, that I may not see all the misery that must come upon Germany. For I hold, that if ten Moses were to arise and intercede for us, they could not prevail; I myself feel also, when I wish to pray for my dear Germany, that my prayer recoils on me, and will not ascend as it is wont to do when I pray for other things." At a later period he states in his *Table-talk:* "It is a strange and very grievous thing, that the world hath become worse and worse since the revival of the true doctrine of the Gospel, by the special grace and revelation of God. Every one perverts Christian liberty into carnal wantonness; therefore is the reign of the devil and the pope, as far as external rule is concerned, the best for the world, for with such only will it be ruled with severe laws and justice, and with superstition. The doctrine of the grace of God maketh it worse. Alas, the world remaineth the world! If our Lord Christ hath not been able to amend it, neither shall we, and must therefore let it go its own gait to the devil."

And yet this man, whom we have accompanied

through successive and most severe mental sufferings, caused by conflicts, doubts, and fears, could at other times effectually strengthen timorous souls; and with the deeply impressive confidence of the hero, and the touching simplicity of a child, uphold the faith in the sanctity and indestructible nature of his cause, even when all around him became discouraged. He wrote, during the sitting of the diet at Augsburg, to his friend the Chancellor Bruck, from the castle of Coburg (where he intended to erect three tabernacles by his works—one for the Psalter, one for the Prophets, and one for Esop): "I have recently seen two strange things: the first, when I looked from my window, I saw the stars and the beautiful dome of God, and saw no pillars on which the builder had placed the arch; yet the heavens fell not, and the arch still standeth. *Now there are some who seek for such pillars*, who would like to touch and seize them; but because they cannot do that, they flutter and tremble, as if the heaven would certainly fall; if they could grasp the pillars, the heaven would stand firm. The second strange thing: I saw great heavy clouds sweep over us in such masses that they could be compared to a great sea; yet I saw no support on which they could rest or find footing; still they fell not upon us, but greeted us with a gloomy aspect, and sped on. When they had passed, the rainbow shone forth,—that was but a weak support, a mere reflection or

shade. Nevertheless it proved in reality that it bore the vapoury burden and protected us."

As through the power of his *faith*, so also by the tenderness and magnanimity of his *love* did he exhibit the spirit of a true evangelical priest, which most beautifully proves its vocation by devoting itself to the service of others. In this sense especially—as a compassionate feeling for the distress of others, as a ministry ready for every act of sacrifice, in imitation of Him who gave himself a sacrifice for us—did he practise love in noble self-denial, esteeming it the highest gem of spiritual Christianity. How deeply was he grieved to find the active proofs of the divine spirit so rare among those who nevertheless called themselves Christians: "That is indeed true," he exclaims (1522) to his people at Wittenberg; "ye have the true Gospel and the pure Word of God, yet no one giveth his goods to the poor. . . . . *Ye are willing to receive all the good gifts of God in the sacrament, but are unwilling to pour them fourth again in love. No one will stretch forth his hand to another; no one heartily taketh the part of another;* but every one thinketh only of himself, what is of advantage to him, and seeketh his own. No one looketh to the poor, to help them. Oh, pitiable case! . . . . And if ye be not willing to love one another, God will send a great plague upon you; *for he will not suffer his Word to be revealed and preached in vain.*"

Do we not find in these impressive words of the head of German Protestantism those highest requirements of Christianity already indicated, which we are beginning in our days to comprise under the expression *spiritual mission* (innere Mission)? And have we not also here expressed, in the simplest words, that moving truth which, though often and long despised, makes itself suddenly heard and felt at particular times in overwhelming judgments (as, for instance, in the convulsions of the last few years,) —*that* truth, that whenever we set at naught the laws of love for any length of time, the laws of wrath will inevitably overtake us sooner or later; *because the entire moral constitution of the world has been founded by its sacred Author on righteousness and love; and all presumptuous attempts to disarrange it must finally lead, as insane opposition to the divine will, to self-annihilation?*

Luther himself practised in the highest degree that quality in which he found others so frequently deficient: his affecting readiness to give all he had, and rather deny himself than see others want, is one of the most amiable features in his character, and placed him on a par with the noblest Christians of later times, such as Spener, Frank, and Lavater. Slight indeed was the charm of worldly possession and enjoyment for his great mind. Well might he use the sublime expressions with regard to himself:

"*If my own heart did not drive me to work for the sake of the Man who died for me, the world could not offer me money enough for writing a book, or interpreting any portion of the Bible. The world shall not reward my work; the world is too mean and poor to do it.* And he who thought so little of making a provision for himself, that he gave every thing to the needy, even the money his wife received from her god-mother, habitually refused the rich presents of his prince, and was never weary of begging for others, could reconcile himself gladly to the probability of being obliged to earn his bread by the work of his hands, and on that account began to practice the crafts of the turner and gardener.

His importance as preacher and priest was intimately connected with the position he occupied—*in fact*, if not in name—as head of the church (*Kirchenfürst*). A glance at his correspondence will best show his extraordinary activity as the adviser of numerous individuals, communities, and countries; nothing important, more particularly if it referred to the schools or the church, was for a long course of years undertaken without his counsel. The Electors John and John-Frederick, with many distinguished men of their immediate connexion, highly respected Luther's authority in all matters of conscience; while he, on his side, availed himself principally of their help in establishing the new order of things. The

important position he assigned to the ruling princes in the new church, as well as to the authorities generally (that is, in modern phrase, to the state,) had a reflective political influence beyond all calculation on succeeding centuries: the tendency to the development of absolute sovereign power was greatly increased by the peculiar genius of Luther's Protestantism. He insisted on the obedience of the Christian subject even towards tyrannical and unjust rulers; but should any disputes arise between a king and his parliament concerning established laws, he decided that another authority should interpose and arbitrate. He condemned, without reserve, all violent attempts on the part of subjects to right themselves. He terms insurrection the worst crime, and the murder of tyrants the watchword of anarchy: "Whenever the destruction of tyrants is sanctioned, general license ensues, and soon reaches such a height, that those are branded as tyrants who are not tyrants, and are put to death just as the mob takes it into its own head. If we are to suffer injustice, let it be rather by the hands of the authorities; for the mob knows no moderation, and every single man amongst them is as bad as five tyrants."

Although he lays so much emphasis on the inviolability of the supreme power, yet innumerable passages in his works prove how meanly he thought of the majority of the princes of his time. He calls

Duke George of Saxony a "fury, a miserable madman, a restless destructive tool of Satan. He once wrote to Spalatin with reference to King Christian of Denmark: "It may chance that God will admit some time or another your dainty game (*Wildpret*,) that is to say, a king and queen, to heaven." The strongest expressions are found, as is well known, in his controversial writings against Henry VIII. of England, whom he styles "Henry, king *not* by God's grace. I care not whether King Hal or King Dick, devil, or hell itself made the book: whoever tells a lie is a liar; therefore I don't fear him (this lying king). Indeed, my young squire, say what you please, but you shall also hear what won't please you; I will cure your itching for lies! So much are your great lords accustomed to flattering and feigning, that they pretend it is all up with the Christian faith if we tell them the truth, and sprinkle salt on their nasty, festering wounds. King Hal bears out the proverb, 'No fools like kings and princes.' If any king or prince imagines that Luther will humble himself before him, repent of his doctrine, and seek for pardon, he is grossly deceived, and indulges in a golden dream. . . . As far as my doctrine is concerned, I deem no one great; but I treat him as a bubble, or even less. . . . . But where my person and life are concerned, I am ready to humble myself before any one, even before a child. Where my doctrine and ministry are con-

cerned, let no one expect patience or humility from me; least of all, your tyrants and persecutors of the Gospel."

He did not regard the strong language he employed with reference to these princes as inconsistent with his doctrine of unconditional obedience. In fact, he only repudiated *violent* resistance to the authorities, and considered *moral* resistance to all abuses of absolute power perfectly justifiable; and, as Christian censor, fearlessly practised it, in the name of morality, and on the authority of the Word of God. For himself he claimed on this score the greatest latitude of pen and tongue. With reference to the internal government of the new church, he drew a clear distinction between *freedom of faith* and *freedom of teaching*: no one compelled to faith; but no public teacher could be allowed to teach any doctrine differing from the fundamental articles of faith based on the Scriptures, or from the recognized doctrines of the church: "they are not to be tolerated, but punished as public blasphemers." Even *he*, therefore, could propose no better solution to this most difficult of all problems in the constitution of state-churches. When two religious parties contended in the state, he gave to the civil authorities the power of deciding which of the two taught in accordance with the Scriptures;—the first step towards the establishment of political, after the overthrow of Romish, popery!

The most painful moments which his position as spiritual adviser to the Protestant princes inflicted upon him, were occasioned, no doubt, by the notorious second marriage which the Landgrave Philip of Hesse contracted during the lifetime of his first wife. Never did he feel so much pain in giving counsel as when forced by this prince to advise with him on this occasion. It threw the more gentle Melanchthon upon a sick-bed, and brought him to the brink of the grave. We know not what Luther felt at that time; how severity and gentleness, how repugnance to the act and indulgent consideration of the peculiarities of the case, contended within him. But it is certain that Calvin would have acted otherwise; and also that Luther's character would stand higher if in this matter he had looked neither to the right nor left, but remained true to his moral feelings and principles; obeying God rather than man.

He was far better fitted, by his whole gifts and character, to be the pioneer and the hero of the decisive spiritual battles, than the leader and lawgiver, or the ruling and organising head, of German Protestantism. His virtues and his defects had sprung from the deepest inward and the most violent outward struggles. His world-wide influence lies in contest; but in contest also we detect his vulnerable part. An irascible disposition such as his could scarcely ever, in cases of great excitement, express itself in words,

without so yielding to the impulse of the moment as to overstep the line within which a sober and well-balanced mind would, in peaceable times, confine itself. Every reader will readily apply this observation to Luther's polemical writings, which seldom exhibit the moderation sought for in him by a purer judgment in a less disturbed period. It is true that the tone and manner of his time, and not unfrequently also the irritating and immoderate language of his antagonists, must necessarily excuse and extenuate much that now offends us in his language. Nevertheless, we cannot, without puerile and cowardly sophistry, deny the simple fact, that the real defect in his character is an immoderate violence and a natural spirit of defiance, carried to excess by opposition, frequently presenting unbearable asperities to friend and foe. Both these peculiarities of his natural disposition were rather fostered than subdued by his education and earlier connexions; at a later period, when his hitherto slumbering genius woke up to a sense of his vocation, and accomplished the religious emancipation of his country, these more objectionable features of his character remained blended in a thousand ways with his greatest and noblest qualities. The Luther of history cannot be represented, in his character and influence, without this mixture of the impure and earthly with the pure and divine. Possibly the strength and the weakness, the lights

and shadows of his nature, are inseparable; yet the historical and moral judgment must not be fettered nor silenced by such considerations. Why should we hide the fact, that there occur passages in his polemical writings against Henry VIII. which inspire not only repugnance, but disgust? Why conceal, that in his controversy with his Catholic opponents, as well as with Zwingle and others, he exceeded the limits which a liberal education and Christian feeling impose? We would rather leave the question, "Whether the unhallowed schism between the Lutheran and Reformed churches—at one time near a friendly compromise (by means of the Wittenberg concordia, 1536)—is to be laid to the charge of Luther's violence and pertinacity?" undiscussed and undecided, than nourish the controversial spirit on matters of faith which again rages so violently in our time. When will a more advanced stage of Christian knowledge and experience bring the unedifying wars of theologians to their merited end? Luther is not indebted to the controversy concerning the sacrament, however great its importance, for his title as the Reformer of Germany.

LUTHER'S DOMESTIC LIFE AND FRIENDSHIPS.

We experience an agreeable change when we regard Luther in his *family* and *among his friends*. We seem to pass from the close chamber into the open air

of spring. From the Augustine cloister at Wittenberg, which had now become the residence of Luther and his family, sprang the noblest germ of social morality, and of the purest spirit of German domestic life. This cloister-home became the ideal type of numberless families of Protestant Germany, and especially of those numerous families of evangelical ministers (*Priester*) to whom German society is so largely indebted for morality and piety. The simple fact, that Luther, the former monk and Catholic priest, who as such had been excluded from the matrimonial tie by the twofold bonds of the hierarchical ordinances of Rome and the practice of centuries, ventured to become the founder of a family, was in itself most important.

By this step he as decidedly opposed the Catholicism of the middle ages as by burning the papal bull. As long as celibacy was considered a high degree of holiness, and an indispensable condition of the priestly office, the religious and moral dignity of marriage and of domestic life was misunderstood and denied by an exaggerated spiritualism; which, as an ecclesiastical ordinance, was as much opposed to the divine law in nature as in the Scriptures. It is true Luther wavered here and there, in single expressions, between the purely realistic and the higher and ideal conception of matrimony; seeming at times to regard it only in the light of a law of nature, and again as the per-

fection of moral life on earth; but both these views were in the end blended into one and a much higher point of view (in the divine harmony of nature and grace). At all events, Luther's act in this direction was much more important than his words; for it proclaimed to Germany and Europe that the man at the head of the Reformation had discovered that Catholic monasticism and priesthood could not be reconciled to the moral and religious principles of primitive Christianity. Long previous to his own marriage he had maintained the nullity of monastic vows and the laws of clerical celibacy, from the authority of nature and of the Gospel; for years past evangelical clergymen had married; but it was very different when the spiritual head of the Reformntion, towards whom the eyes of all Europe were directed, set the seal to this primitive Christian idea by *his* example. He had steadily resisted several earlier attempts to persuade him to this step; at length he suddenly resolved on taking it, at a time (June, 1525) when it was least expected. Immediately after the termination of the peasants' war, the consequences of which still seriously threatened the cause of the Reformation, he brought home his wife, Catherine von Bora, formerly a nun. A short time before, he had pressingly urged the Elector-Archbishop of Mayence to get married: "I do not understand how a man can remain without a wife, and not incur the wrath and displeasure of God;

and fearful would it be for him to be found without a wife in the hour of death. For what answer will he give when God asks him: 'I made thee a man, not to be alone, but to take a wife; where is thy wife?'" He then made the offer: "If my marriage would strengthen your grace's purpose, I would willingly set your grace the example."

The joys and sorrows of his married state of one-and-twenty years have been frequently described in full. Our object, therefore (limited to a vivid and comprehensive sketch of this distinguished man), will be attained if we give a brief notice of him, in his own words, as a son, a husband, and a father.

When he believed himself in great danger during the illness in 1527, to which we have alluded, he said to his wife: "My very dearest Kate, I pray thee, if our good God take me to him this time, be resigned to his merciful will. Thou art my wedded wife; thou must be quite convinced of that, and have no doubt of it, let the blind, ungodly world say what it will. Do thou act according to God's Word, and hold fast by it, and thou shalt have a certain constant support against the devil and all his slanderous tongues." Afterwards he asked for his child: "Where is my very dearest Hänschen?" When it was brought to him, and it smiled upon its father, he said: "Oh, poor dear child! Well, I commend my most dearly-beloved Kate, and thee, poor orphan, to my faithful

righteous God. Ye have nothing; but God, who is a father of orphans and the judge of widows, will assuredly feed and take care of you." His wife, although much alarmed at these words, yet composed herself quickly, and said; "My dearest doctor, if it be God's will, I shall be better pleased to know you are with Him than me; but it doth not concern only me and my child, but many pious Christian people who yet have need of you. Do not grieve about me, my beloved master; I commend you to His divine will, and trust to God that he will graciously preserve you."

His love for his parents is expressed most affectingly in two incomparable letters, which, although well known, may not here be omitted:

"To my dear father, Hans Luther, citizen of Mansfeld in the valley, grace and peace in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

"Dear Father,—My brother Jacob hath written to me that you are dangerously ill. As the air is unhealthy, and danger is everywhere, also on account of these evil times, I am anxious about you. For although God hath granted and preserved to you hitherto a strong and firm body, yet your age now causes me anxious thoughts. Still, none of us are secure of our life at any hour, nor ought to be; for which reason I would have wished exceeding much to go to you in the body; but my friends have ad-

vised and persuaded me against it; and I think myself that I ought not to incur the danger and tempt Providence,—for you know how the lords and peasants favour me!

"But it would be a great joy to me, if you would consent to come hither with my mother; which my Kate also, and all of us, request with tears. I hope we shall take good care of you. Therefore I have sent Cyriacus to you, to ascertain whether your weakness will allow of it. For whichever the Divine Will may ordain concerning you, in this life or the next, I would most readily (as is my right) be about you in the body, and prove myself grateful to God and you, with filial love and duty, according to the fourth commandment.

"In the meantime I pray with my whole heart to that Father who hath created and given you to me as a father, to strengthen you from His boundless goodness, and enlighten and keep you with His spirit, that you may acknowledge with joy and thanks the blessed doctrine of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to which you are called and have come, from the past fearful darkness and error; and I hope that His mercy, which hath granted you such knowledge, and by it hath begun His work in you, may preserve and continue it to the end, in the life to come, and in the happy future of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

"For He hath already sealed such doctrine and

faith in you, and confirmed it by marks; that is to say, you have suffered much abuse, disgrace, contempt, mockery, despite, hatred, enmity, and danger, for His name's sake, like the rest of us. (Gal. vi. 17). But these are the real marks, in which we must be foreknown; and like our Lord Christ, as St. Paul saith (Rom. viii. 29), that we may also be like unto his future glory.

"Then keep your heart fresh and comforted in your weakness: for we have in a future life a sure and true helper with God, namely, Jesus Christ, who hath overcome death and sin for us, and sitteth there now looking for us with all the angels, and waiteth the moment of our departure home; so that we need not be anxious, nor fear to sink and perish at last. His power over death and sin is too great for them to hurt us; so faithful and righteous is he, that he will not fail us, provided we put our trust in him.

"For He hath spoken, promised, and affirmed it; He will not and cannot lie nor deceive—have no doubt on that head. 'Ask,' He saith, 'and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Matt. vii. 7); and elsewhere (Acts ii. 21), 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' And all the Psalms are full of comforting promise, the ninety-first Psalm especially, which is good to read for all sick people.

"I have said this unto you in writing, being full of anxiety on account of your illness (because we know not the hour), that I may be a partaker of your faith, conflict, consolation, and thanks to God for His holy Word, which He hath in this our time granted us in so bountiful and gracious a way, for the strengthening of our soul.

"But if it be His will that you shall be detained yet longer in this life, and share our sufferings in this sorrowful and sinful vale of tears, and witness much suffering, or bear your part, with all other Christians, in enduring and overcoming it, He will grant you grace to accept it all willingly and obediently. This life is nothing but a real vale of sorrow, in which we see and experience the more sin, wickedness, torment, and wretchedness, the longer we live. Neither will it cease nor lessen until we are laid in the ground: then indeed it must cease, and leave us to sleep in the peace of Christ, until He cometh and again awaketh us in blessedness. Amen. May He, our Lord and Saviour, be with you and by you, that we may (and I pray God it may be here or there) meet again in joy. For our faith is sure, and we do not doubt but we shall meet again shortly in Christ: since the departure from this life is of much less account before God than if I left Mansfeld and you to come hither, or you left me and Wittenberg to go to Mansfeld. Of this be assured, we shall but fall asleep, and all will be changed.

"Although I hope that your pastors and preachers faithfully and abundantly minister unto you in this matter, so that you scarce need my prattling, yet I could not forbear trying to make up in this way for my absence from you in the body, in which, God knoweth, I grieve heartily.

"My Kate, little Hans and Lena, and aunt Lena, and the whole household, greet you, and faithfully pray for you. I send greetings to my dear mother and all friends. The mercy and power of God be with you now and for ever! Amen.

"Your loving son,

"Martin Luther.

"At Wittenberg, *February*, 15, 1530."

In the following year, he wrote, under similar circumstances, to his mother (May 20, 1531):

"Grace and peace in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour: Amen.

"My Dearest Mother,—I have received the news of your illness from my brother Jacob: and I am much grieved for it, particularly as I cannot be with you in the body, as I fain would. Still, I appear bodily before you with this writing; and, with all our family, will not be absent from you in the spirit.

"Although I hope that, without me, your heart hath long since been well disciplined, and that you well understand (thank God for it!) His comfortable

Word, and are provided with preachers and friends to comfort you,—yet will I do my part also, and, according to my duty, acknowledge you my mother, and myself your child,—for such the God and Creator of both hath made us, and assigned us duties towards each other,—that I also may increase the number of your comforters.

"Firstly, my dear mother, you now know, by God's grace, that your illness is his fatherly and merciful rod, and a very gentle rod compared with those which he applieth to the ungodly, nay, sometimes even to His own beloved children, of which one is beheaded, another burnt, a third drowned; so that all of us may say, 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter' (Psalm xliv. 23; Rom. viii. 36). Therefore should your illness neither grieve nor trouble you; but be accepted with thanks, as sent by His mercy; seeing that it is but a slight suffering, even though it should end in death or dying, as compared with the sufferings of His own beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which He hath not suffered on His own account, as *we* suffer, but hath suffered for us and our sins.

"Secondly, you also know, my dear mother, the great article and ground of your salvation, to which you are to look for comfort in this as in all other troubles — namely, the corner-stone, Jesus Christ

(Isaiah xxviii. 16; Rom. ix. 33; 1 Peter ii. 6), who will not waver nor desert us, and will not let us sink or be destroyed. For He is the Saviour, and is called the Saviour of all poor sinners (1 Tim. i. 15), and of all those who are in trouble and on the point of death, if they rely on Him and call upon His name.

"He saith: 'Be comforted; I have overcome the world.' If He hath overcome the world, He hath most assuredly overcome also the prince of this world, with all his might. And what else is his might but death, by which he hath made us subject unto him, and holds us captive for our sins' sake? But now death and sin are overcome, we may, in joy and comfort, listen to the cheering word: 'Be comforted; I have overcome the world.'

"And we ought not to doubt that it is certainly true; and not only so, but we are further commanded to receive such consolation with joy and thanksgiving. And those who will not be comforted by this word do injustice and the greatest dishonour to the blessed Comforter, as if it were not true that He bids us be of good cheer, or as if it were not true that He hath overcome the world; so that we give our vanquished foes, the devil, sin, and death, strength to become tyrants, in opposition to our beloved Saviour;—from which God preserve us!

"Therefore we may rejoice in all security and confidence; and if any thought of sin or death affright us, we must raise our hearts and say: 'See, my soul,

what dost thou? Dear death, dear sin, livest thou and affrightest me? Knowest thou not that thou art overcome? and that thou, death, art even dead? Knowest thou not One who saith of thee, 'I have overcome the world?' It is not fit for me to hear and give heed to thy threats, but to the consoling words of my Saviour; 'Be of good cheer, be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' He is the conqueror, the true hero, who giveth and imputeth his victory to me in these words: 'Be of good cheer.' To Him I cleave; on His word and comforting I rely: withersoever I go, He will not deceive me. Thou wouldst gladly deceive me by thy false terrors, and separate me from this Conqueror and Saviour by thy lying inventions: and they are lying inventions, as completely as it is a truth that He hath overcome thee, and hath commanded us to be of good cheer.'

"To such knowledge, I say, hath God called you in His mercy; for this ye have His seal and writing,—that is to say, the Gospel, baptism, and the sacrament, all which ye hear preached, so that ye will have no further trouble nor danger. Only be of good cheer, and return thanks with joy for such exceeding grace, for He who hath commenced it in you will bring it graciously to an end. For we cannot help ourselves in these matters; we cannot prevail with our works against sin, death, and the devil; therefore another standeth in our place, who hath greater strength, and

giveth us the victory, and commandeth us to accept it without doubt, and saith: 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;' and again: 'I live, and ye also shall live, and your joy no man taketh from you' (John xvi. 22; xiv. 19).

"The Father and God of all comfort grant you, through His holy Word and Spirit, a firm, joyous, and thankful faith, that ye may happily overcome this and all other trouble, and that ye may taste and experience the truth of His words: 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' And I herewith commend you, body and soul, to his mercy. Amen. All your children pray for you, and also my Kate; some of them are crying, others eating away, and saying: 'Grandmother is very ill.' God's mercy be with us all! Amen.

"Your loving son,

"MARTIN LUTHER."

We conclude these selections from Luther's letters with that charming composition which he addressed from Coburg to his little son Hans, in the simple poetry adapted to children (1530).

"Grace and peace in Christ! My dear little son, —I am glad to find that thou learnest well and prayest diligently. Do this, my son, and continue it: when I return home, I will bring thee a fine fairing.

"I know a beautiful cheerful garden, in which many

children walk about. They have golden coats on, and gather beautiful apples under the trees, and pears, and cherries, and plums; they sing and jump about, and are merry; they have also fine little horses with golden bridles and silver saddles. And I asked the man whose garden it is: 'Whose children are they?' He replied: "These are the children who like to pray and learn, and are pious.' Then I said: 'My good man, I have a son; his name is Hans Luther: may he not also come to this garden, to eat such nice apples and pears, and ride such fine little horses, and play with these children?' And the man said: 'If he likes to pray and learn, and is pious, he shall come to this garden with Lippus and Just: and when they have all come together, they shall have pipes and cymbals, lutes, and other musical instruments, and dance, and shoot with little cross-bows.'

"And he showed me a fine meadow in the garden prepared for dancing; there hung nothing but golden pipes, cymbals, and beautiful silver cross-bows. But it was yet early, and the children had not dined. Therefore I could not wait for the dancing, and said to the man: 'My good master, I will quickly go and write all this to my dear little son Hans, that he may pray diligently, learn well, and be pious, that he may also be admitted to this garden; but he hath an Aunt Lena, whom he must bring with him.' The man answered: 'So be it; go and write this to him.'

"Therefore, my dear little son Hans, learn and pray with all confidence, and tell all this to Lippus and Just, that they also may learn and pray; and ye will all meet in this beautiful garden. Herewith I commend thee to Almighty God. Give greetings to Aunt Lena, and also a kiss from me. Anno 1530.

Thy loving father,

MARTIN LUTHER."

A man who, like Luther, united surpassing strength of character and intellect to deep expansive feeling and elevation of soul, was calculated to exercise an extraordinary power of attraction over all within his reach. We find, accordingly, a great number of revering friends unreservedly devoted to him, and who remained faithful to him to the end. The name of Philip Melanchthon occurs before all others to the mind, when Luther's friends are spoken of. The close connexion between these two men for the attainment of one great object, and the mutual balancing of the excellences of each, has indeed become almost proverbial in Germany. Power and gentleness, courage and discretion, original thought and education, biblical and classical learning, formed in these two friends a brotherly union, which bore the happiest fruits, not only for the Reformation, but for the whole religious and scientific culture of evangelical Germany. In later years this relation between them did not, unfor-

tunately, remain as pure as at an earlier period, when their intimate union was one of the most gratifying facts known in history. The harsh, domineering, and defiant features which were unmistakable in Luther's character, and which became more and more pointedly prominent in consequence of the divisions among the Protestant party, proved occasionally an insupportable burden to Melanchthon,—all the more insupportable because he bore it in silence. His whole nature, education, and convictions guided him with increasing decision to a mild, plastic, and comprehensive conception on precisely those controverted points respecting which Luther gradually settled into an abrupt and exclusive dogmatism. Melanchthon laments this most bitterly soon after Luther's death, in a confidential letter, which is calculated to give the most painful impressions with regard to both the great men. But in the memory of the German nation, only the grand, fruitful, and brilliant aspect of this friendship continues to live unclouded; while the humiliating shadows, the penalty paid by human weakness, are unnoticed except by truth-loving historians and malicious opponents of the reformers.

It is an inexpressibly soothing and affecting circumstance in Luther's career, that he, the man of battle, of the most violent and important conflicts, left this earthly scene while engaged in a work of love and peace. Throughout life he had fought for the most

sacred spiritual possession of man: for the sake of peace to his more immediate country, he did not disdain to employ his last remaining strength in the settlement of a poor quarrel relating to worldly possessions.

The reformer, whom Germany justly places in the van of her intellectual heroes, died (Feb. 18, 1546) at Eisleben, the city in which he first saw the light sixty-three years before. Two of the most important men of modern Germany, who in the last century shared the intellectual inheritance of Luther divided into opposite sections, coincide unintentionally in overflowing admiration of his greatness. "I admire Luther to such a degree," writes Lessing, "that I am almost pleased to discover deficiencies in him; for I might else have been in danger of deifying him. The human deficiencies I discover in him are to me as valuable as the most dazzling of his excellences." And again, nearly a hundred years ago (1759) Hamann says: "What a disgrace it is to our time, that the spirit of this man, who has founded our church, should be thus covered with ashes! What a power of eloquence! what cleverness of exposition! what a prophet!" And later (1780) "Are we not once more reduced to the point from which *he* started?"

RETROSPECT AND CONCLUSION.

If, at Luther's grave, we once more inquire for the result of the great religious epoch of which he was the spiritual head, a historical review will give us the following answer: In the middle of the sixteenth century a point of great importance was gained,—the power of Rome was destroyed in a portion of the Christian world; and the foundation was laid of a more intellectual and pure church, much more nearly approaching the original spirit of Christianity. An extraordinary impulse was given to the development of the destinies of Europe, which resulted in the victorious rise and lasting ascendency of the German nations; while in the south of Europe it engendered a religious and intellectual ferment, which, although violently suppressed, yet tended, in the countries subject to the Roman sway, to at least a partial purification of Catholicism.

Opposed to these great and positive results of the Reformation, stand, however, undeniably the less gratifying facts, that many hopes awakened in the beginning of the great change have been disappointed. In fact, the religious problem was solved only by halves, the new order of things founded only elementarily; its principles secured by many struggles, it is true, but only partially carried out, and even the

organisation of the new church arrested mid-course. Intimidated by the radicalism of the Anabaptists, and through the rebellion of the peasants; wearied and embittered by the dissensions between Luther and Zwingle; urged on by the continued existence of a powerful Roman Catholic party,—German Protestantism was forced to take prematurely compass and substance, and in self-defence, as it were, to intrench itself within an incomplete form. Under other circumstances, the great body of the German nation, united on the basis of the Gospel, would assuredly have completed the Reformation in a manner more satisfactory and comprehensive than the fragmentary condition in which it was left. Nor had the free and intimate union of the scientific with the religious spirit been lastingly attained, as hoped for in the first year of the movement. The beneficial effects of a liberal education had been again narrowed in many directions by the slavish and pedantic adherence to a few authors of Greek and Roman antiquity. The national literature had lost, in the strife of opinions, its free poetic spirit and its joyous inspiration. Of religious mysticism, which formerly warmed and nourished Luther and the Reformation, little more than a dull fanatical element remained, which finally exhausted itself in superstitious enthusiasm,—ecstasy, prophecy, anabaptism, and communism. But also a purer and deeper element of German mysticism was

left unsatisfied, nay felt itself repulsed, by the too-narrow theological and scholastic dogmatism of later Protestants; and down to our times, this more immediate apprehension of Christianity has never ceased to assert its indestructible influence in different stages of development. The right of private judgment in interpreting the Scriptures, which promised so much, as established by Luther and his precursors, was less and less frequently exercised, in consequence of the dull and merely mechanical treatment of the articles of faith adopted by the *church;* so that one of the highest and most important tasks of the Reformation, *the creation of a real biblical system of theology*, in the true comprehensive meaning of the word, was accomplished and perfected in the last century only.

Germany was also disappointed in the hope of *political regeneration and national unity*, as a consequence of religious enlightenment. It is true, her princes and representatives have had it attributed to them as an honour, that they did not consciously strive for this end; but if we carefully examine the connexion of German history down to the present time, we shall recognise, even in this circumstance, only the miserable indecision which has so frequently been the bane of Germany. Had not the Protestant princes and cities already ventured upon resistance to the emperor, and at length (in the war of Schmalcalden, 1546–1547) upon open rebellion? Did they not

cause a division of the empire into two separate masses, by which means the political *hegemony* of a Catholic or Protestant state must have become, sooner or later, inevitable in Germany? Did not the constant fear of the emperor's intentions; the great, although temporary, importance of Gustavus Adolphus; the misery of the Thirty Years' War; and, finally, the gradual growing up, under much trouble and with changing fortunes, of a Protestant power in the north of Germany, stand in the closest connexion therewith?

If we estimate all according to the full weight of its immeasurable consequences, we shall have to acknowledge to ourselves, that had the princes and the league of Schmalcalden realised their position and its consequences without any illusion; had they comprehended that then the possibility of a conservative reform and union of Germany, in the spirit of victorious evangelical Protestantism, was in question;—they might, assembled around a Protestant emperor and a real reformed German diet, have entered upon the course which, much later, conducted the British empire to a sound political condition and to national greatness. But this was not to be. And it is the duty of the historian, not to put his own construction upon the past, but to seek to decipher the handwriting of Providence.

Let us rather complete our retrospection with

cheering and hopeful words. Much may have been unattained; still, the memorable intellectual advance gained in the period of the Reformation contained the germ of life, the development of which threw open to the German mind a free career of civilization, and awakened the deepest religious feeling. Both must lead to a great end,—to the true satisfaction and reconciliation of the moral and intellectual wants of human nature, by means of an understanding and a realization of Christian truth,—if German Protestantism is not to be brought to a disgraceful end by inaction and schism.

It was the object of this work to bring before the reader the hero of a period of German history, which, through the greatness of its events, and the immeasurable significance of its consequences, stands out from all that had gone before and has happened since. At the beginning of these thirty years (1517), a German monk stands at the church-door of Wittenberg, his finger raised in warning, and uttering words as bold as humble. At the close of the same period (1547), there stands a contemplative prince, whom half the world obeys, at the grave of the same monk, in the same church at Wittenberg,—victorious from the battle-field, yet perhaps conscious that a greater conqueror than he sleeps below.

Between these two memorable days lie the great actions of a man who first reformed Germany, and

through Germany the world; a man who, we may say, fashioned the beginning of a new epoch of Christianity and history, because by his agency the internal and the external world, the Christian and the political spirit, were once again fused in the perfect manner which, on other occasions, it needed centuries to bring about.

In the ages before Luther, only the conversion to Christianity of the Germanic peoples, and the struggle between the emperors and the popes, can be compared in spiritual importance with this interval. In modern times, we can only place beside it, loosely speaking, the extraordinary intellectual and political changes which begun with Frederick the Great and the French Revolution, the continuous effects of which are still felt on all sides.

In the first place, a merely unprejudiced *common human* appreciation will suffice to discern in Luther one of the most prominent characters in history; the eternal harmonies of the human soul found a pure and perfect echo in his heart. In the same manner, the age in which he lived was one of those historical turning-points which attract attention, again and again, by the grandeur of their events, and the importance of their consequences.

Besides this *universal* aspect, we must view him from a national point of view. Luther is, more than any other, the man of the German nation. In his

excellences as in his defects, in his grand qualities as well as in his objectionable peculiarities, are reflected the inherent characteristics of the German people; and he may probably be considered as much the representative as the creator of the intellectual and moral peculiarities of our nation. His strong faith, his tenderness and depth of feeling, his great command of popular language, his fondness of home, his enthusiastic love of poetry, music, and nature,—all exhibit at once, in ideal embodiment, the true nature of the German character. Luther is, therefore, the property of his nation; no other reformer has so thoroughly identified himself with the mind of the people.

If we recall, among other great names in German history, the reformers Melanchthon and Zwingle, the Saxon electors Frederick the Wise and John the Constant, Gustavus Adolphus and Frederick the Great; or among intellectual celebrities, Klopstock and Lessing, Hamann and Herder, Göthe and Schiller; or turn to the great religious reformers of the last century, Spener, Franke, Zinzendorf, Benzel, and Lavater;—they all exhibit many features of relationship with Luther, and in some qualities may even surpass him, but not one stands out *a Luther*. One is deficient in the poetic impulse, in the fulness and versatility of his nature; another wants his depth of religious feeling, his firmness of purpose and strength of character; others, again, want his eloquence or

influence over his contemporaries. Luther would not have been Luther without these three leading features,—his strong faith, his spiritual eloquence, and firmness of character and purpose. He united—and this is the most extraordinary fact connected with him—to large endowments of mind and heart, and the great gift of imparting these intellectual treasures, the invincible power of original and creative thought both in resisting and influencing the outer world.

In conclusion: besides the common human and the national point of view, we must very specially consider Luther and his time in a *religious* aspect. We deem a true apprehension of Protestantism, and also of our time (which is greatly determined by it), utterly impossible without a thorough knowledge of the man and of the time in which Protestantism originated: we must go back to the source, if we would look down the very channel of the stream which flows from thence. What Protestantism was originally and was meant to be, we can only learn *there;* what it became afterwards, the history of modern times must point out and determine.

Most persons, when they mention Luther, think of him first in his religious importance; and this is certainly incalculable. He was the providential organ of a new epoch in the material (*irdischen*) realisation of Christianity. In him the reformatory powers (as a regeneration of the Christian world in

knowledge and life) first asserted irresistibly their influence over the fate of Europe and over the entire course of history. *As the founder of a new religious community, as the spiritual head of a particular party* (Confession), *Luther is not seen in his highest abiding importance: he is rather the founder of the Christian church* in all her sects (*Confessionen*), than the mere founder of Lutheranism. It is a providential feature in his course, that he never lost the conviction that, standing on the ground of the universal Christian church, he was not breaking the thread of organic and historical development, but was rather taking it up again by re-opening the living but blocked-up sources of the religion of Christ.

When he sought to restore her noble and original form from hierarchical and rationalistic deformity and perversion, he laboured in the common cause of all sects and parties of Christianity,—in the service of all who did not give up the hope that truth alone can make us free,—that only the heavenly mind of the Crucified One can permanently unite us; while human divisions, all the arbitrary creations of pride and egotism, must perish in the flames of divine justice, which the blind only do not see.

Luther was able to exercise this extraordinary influence upon the religious world, because he had been prepared for it by the ardent travail of his own soul; because, in a word, the history of his own spi-

ritual career represented the conquest of spiritual (Pauline) Christianity over mere formal ordinances (Judaism). The gradual process by which he attained spiritual liberty became, therefore, for innumerable souls, the type of their own religious experience; for through him they first became acquainted, in the significant antecedents of his development, with the pangs of the new birth, and the progressive unfolding of free Christian consciousness.

We have endeavoured to represent Luther by briefly combining those particulars which must give him an imperishable significance and immortalise him;—a labour ever necessary, and ever bringing its own reward, however frequently and efficiently it may have been previously executed. The German Evangelical Church will always look back most fondly, from every change in its temporal condition, and from every stage of its spiritual development, to its first and greatest Leader.

At the present time there is ample reason to throw ourselves again into the midst of that great epoch, in order to attain, by the side of one of the most profound and powerful individuals of all time, a fitting elevation of thought, from whence we may view, with more ease and composure, the desolate steppes and the green pastures of the present. For in this one point at least, our times are brought into

immediate contact with Luther's: then, as now, the highest social and religious questions were brought forward for solution; then, as now, the most sacred rights of individuals and of nations were contended for; and in the sixteenth as in the nineteenth century, the die was cast on which the future depended.

It may, therefore, seem a word in season, if, amidst the ferment of the antagonisms of the present century, we say, to those particularly who deeply feel the need of stemming the torrent by the force of clear commanding thought and firm conviction: Does not every serious mind endeavour, when the present is insecure and the future appears overclouded, to find the necessary light in quiet introspection and in looking back upon its previous life? Why should not we from the same source derive light to solve the civil and religious problems of the times, and direct the future course of our church and people?

THE END.

BR325
.G4 Gelzer, H.
AUTHOR
The life of Martin Luther and the Reformation in Germany.
TITLE

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME
OCT 21 '83	B & L Bindery
2/2/77	MelLando
NOV 26 '85	DOUG JOHNSON LSTC MDIV

BR
325
.G4